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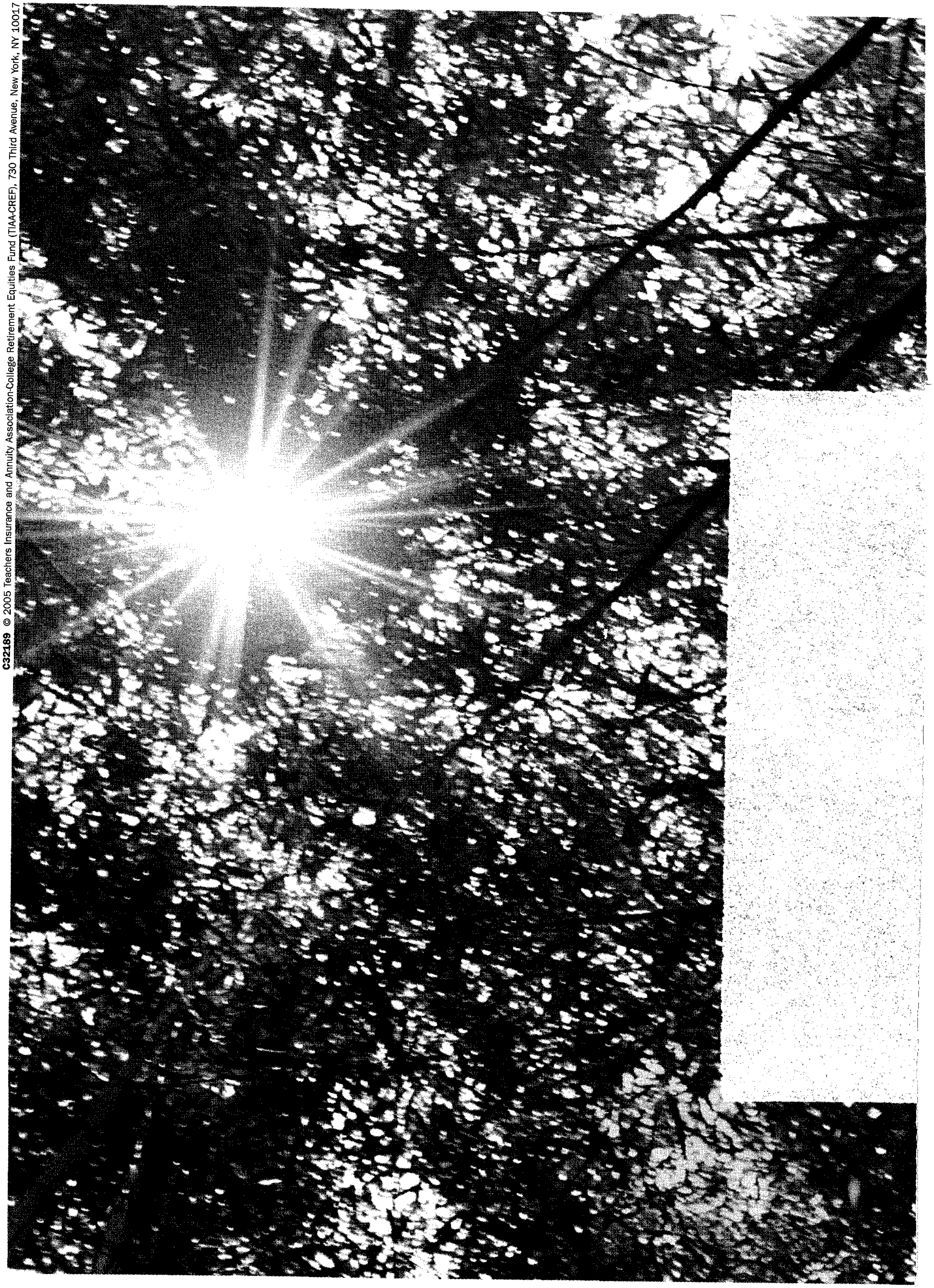

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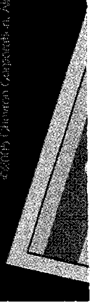

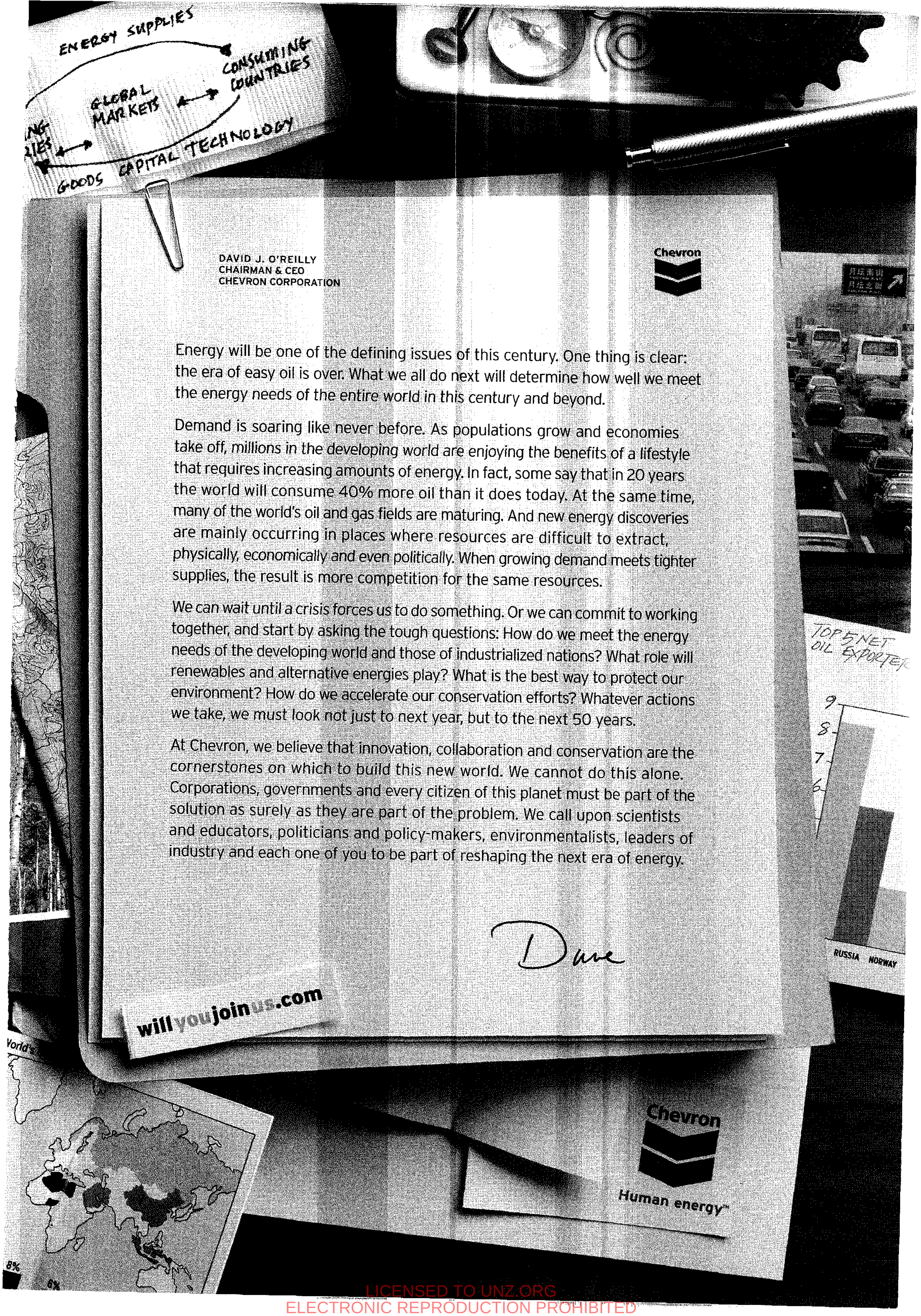

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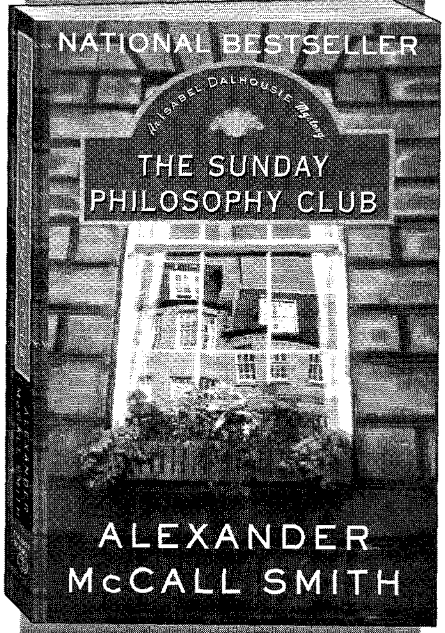

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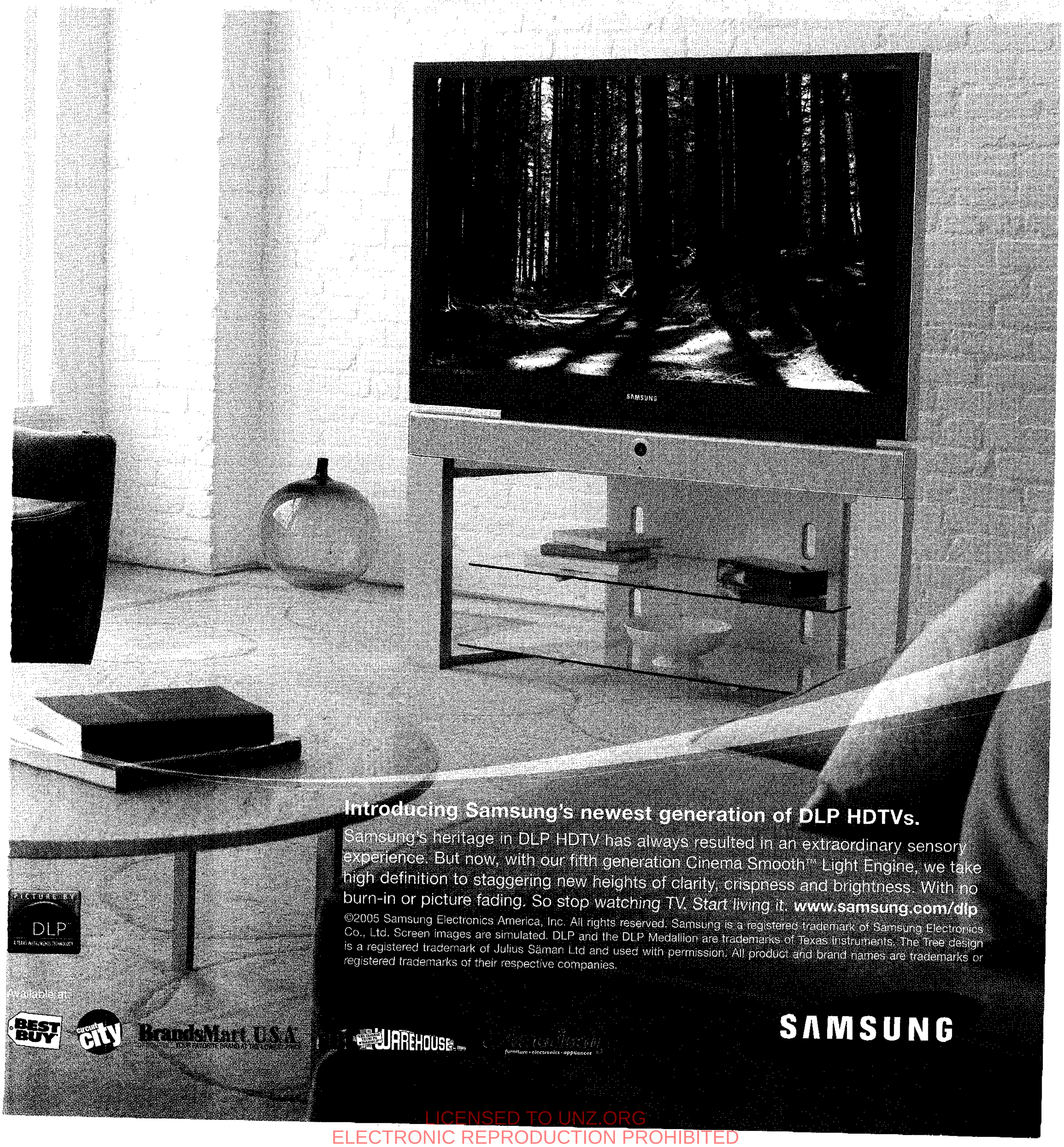

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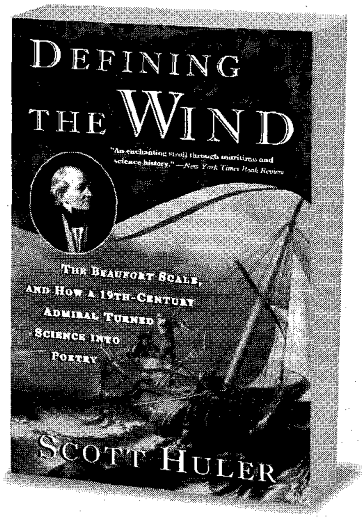
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"An enchanting stroll through maritime and science history." —New York Times Book Review
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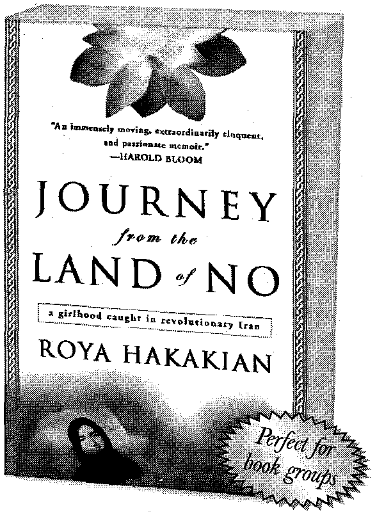
—*ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY*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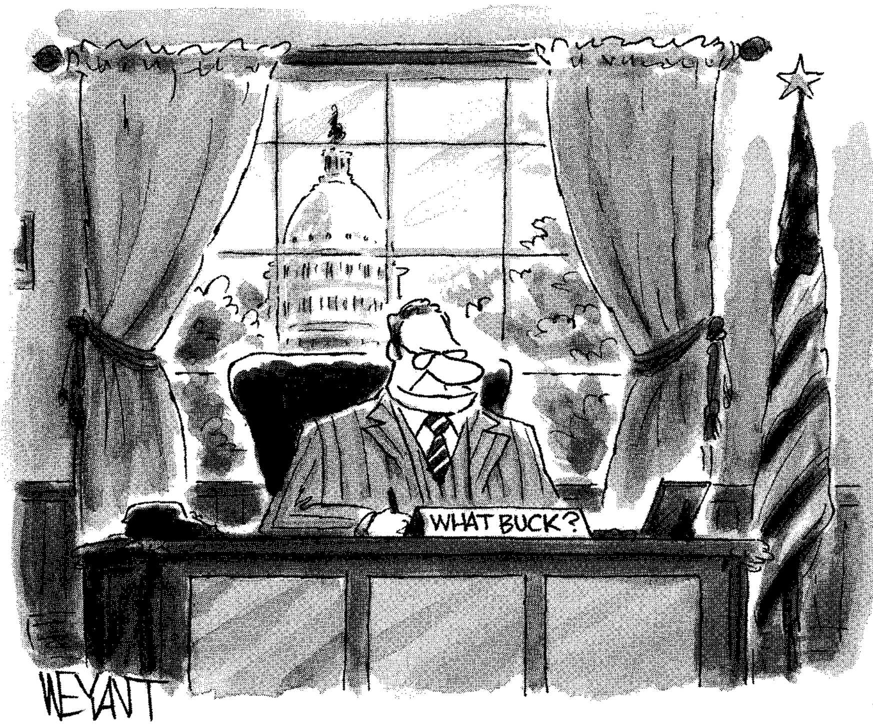
Joan Acocella (Books, p. 94; Dancing, p. 98) is a literary and dance critic for the magazine. ♦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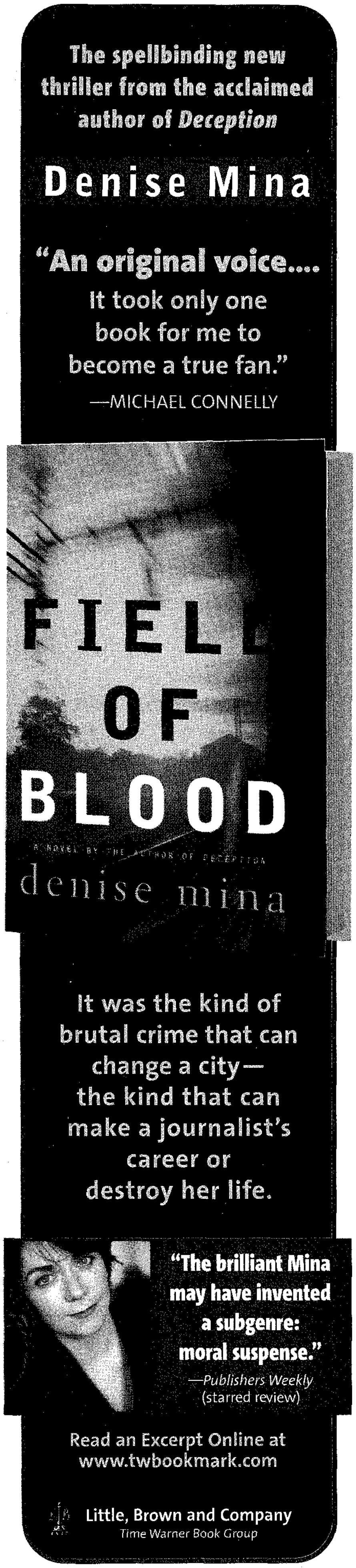

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DEBATING INTELLIGENT DESIGN

While modern proponents of intelligent design tout it as a new scientific theory, it is in fact a very old idea, dating back at least to William Paley, who argued, in 1802, that complex biological structures such as the vertebrate eye are no more likely to have originated in the absence of a designer than a pocket watch is likely to originate in the absence of a watchmaker ("Devolution," by H. Allen Orr, May 30th). Yet, throughout its long history, I.D. has failed to be adopted by the vast majority of working scientists because it does nothing to advance scientific understanding. To hypothesize that some biochemical pathway is "irreducibly complex," and thus intelligently designed, as the biochemist Michael Behe does, adds nothing to our understanding of that pathway. The revolution in molecular biology, for example, would not have occurred if scientists, beginning in the nineteen-fifties, had simply hypothesized that cells or genes were irreducibly complex. Despite protests to the contrary, modern I.D. theory is not a scientific movement but a front for a religio-political movement whose primary goal is the replacement of science as currently practiced with a research program based on Judeo-Christian values. Proponents of this movement know that they cannot achieve this revolution from within the scientific community. Instead, their aim is to manipulate public opinion and exploit the political process, with potentially devastating consequences for how science is practiced, taught, and funded in this country.

Donald H. Feener, Jr.
Salt Lake City, Utah

Advocates of I.D. posit that the design one finds in the natural world is largely beyond what the trial-and-error procedures of evolution could produce. But nature is not intelligently designed in the way a computer chip is, and has many odd curlicues—like a Rube Goldberg machine. Thus, DNA is full of redundancies, and sections without apparent purpose. Or again, throughout our bodies we have proteases to digest proteins. In the lungs, however, breaking down proteins would lead to a fisherman's net of tissue that would not hold air. An intelligent designer would probably have solved this problem by excluding all proteases from the lungs. Instead, we have an anti-protease in our lungs to block the action of the protease. Nature puts protein breakdown in the lung, and then cancels it out. Rube Goldberg would have been proud, but God would have found a more streamlined, less convoluted method to prevent the breakdown of lung tissue.

William A. Pryor
Director, Biodynamics Institute
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, La.

The more that is discovered about sub-cellular systems, the more amazing it seems that such complexity could have simply evolved. But the distrust in the power of evolution demonstrated by I.D. proponents points not to a problem with evolutionary theory but, rather, to the inability of the human mind to fully grasp the invisible world. If I.D. theory is correct, how does one explain the emergence of multi-drug-resistant, pathogenic *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria, transformed over sixty years from its ancestor, which succumbed to a whiff of penicillin? Americans who still believe in creationism in some form should also recall that the technology underlying the televisions they watch and the medications they take is a product of the scientific method, developed over centuries of careful experimentation and hypothesis testing. It is this same approach that fully supports the theory of evolution.

Jonathan D. Kaunitz, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
U.C.L.A. School of Medicine
Los Angeles, Calif.

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Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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Harpists in the Tanglewood Shed, in Lenox, Massachusetts. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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24	25	26	20	21	22	23

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
BACK ON THE BOARDS

Nathan Lane is a surprise late addition to the cast of the new play "Dedication or the Stuff of Dreams," by Terrence McNally; Lane plays the male lead, a theatre-lover named Lou Nuncle. (See page 15.)

NIGHT LIFE
CECIL TAYLOR

The great, ferocious jazz pianist turned seventy-five last year, but he hasn't mellowed with age—he still plays the piano like no one else, detonating cluster bombs of notes, bearing down on the keys with frightening intensity for exhausting periods of time, and generally upending every existing assumption about how the instrument should be treated. Taylor's trio plays two nights at the Blue Note this week. (See page 18.)

ART
OUTSIDERS, INSIDE

Some fifty portraits by self-taught artists—Mose Tolliver, Grandma Moses, and William Edmondson among them—are on display in the American Folk Art Museum's "Self and Subject." (See page 19.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
KEYED IN

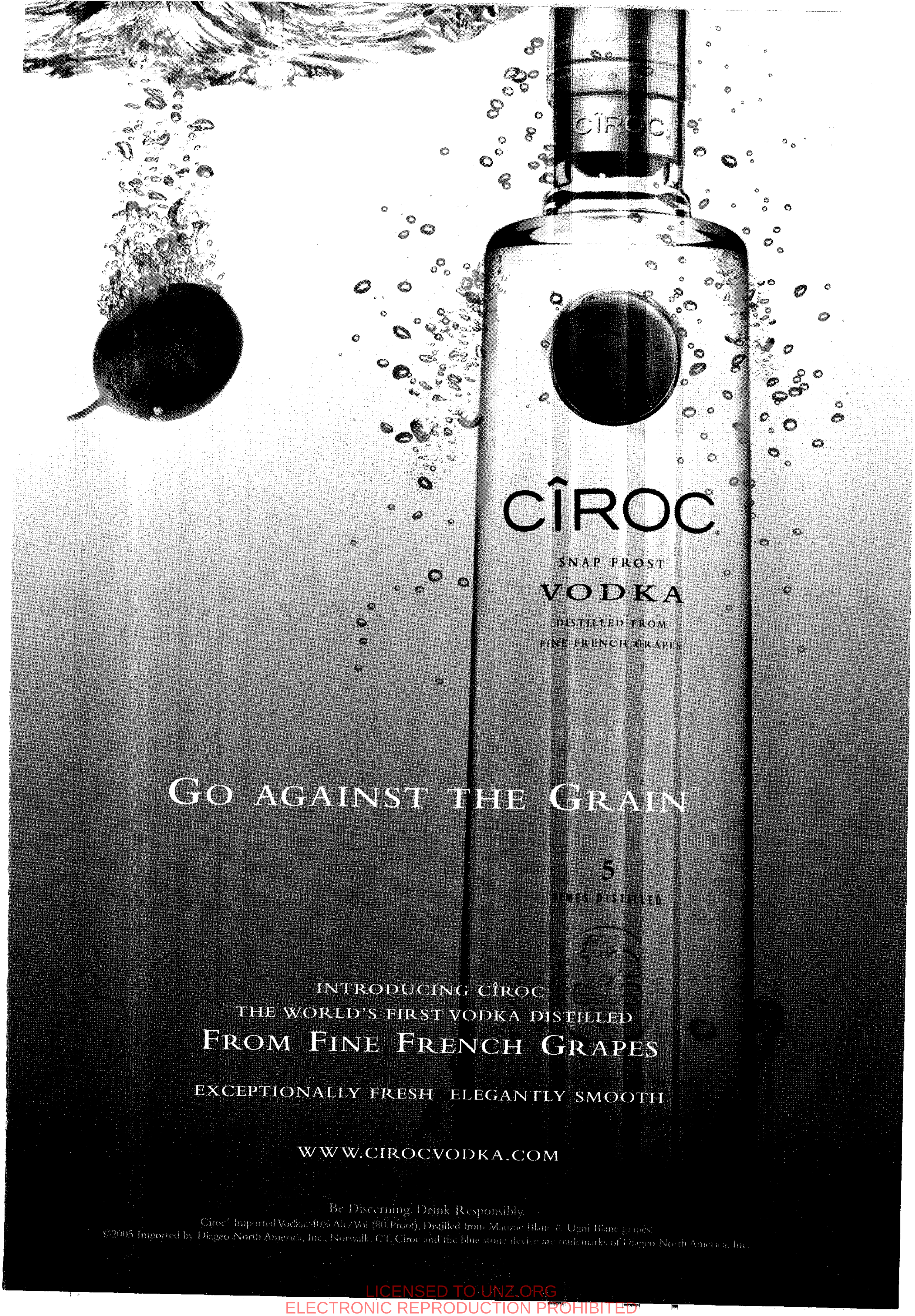
The International Keyboard Institute and Festival, held at the New School's Mannes College of Music, goes into high gear this week, offering concerts by such diverse performers as Ursula Oppens, Earl Wild, and Leslie Howard. (See page 22.)

MOVIES
WYLER'S AMERICA

A series of films by the director William Wyler, now under way as part of Bard Summerscape, continues through August 14. Films include the seminal Bette Davis melodramas "Jezebel" and "The Little Foxes," the latter of which is based on the Lillian Hellman play. (See page 28.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND
MODEL CITIZENS

The Upright Citizens Brigade, the over-the-top comedy troupe known for blistering improvisational shows, sets up shop in Central Park this week with a free performance by its founding members—Amy Poehler, Matt Besser, Ian Roberts, and Matt Walsh. (See page 30.)



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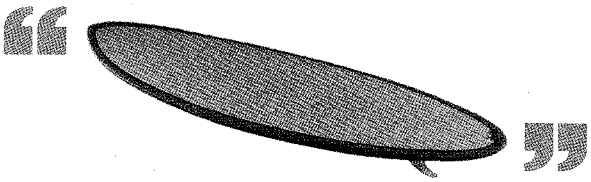

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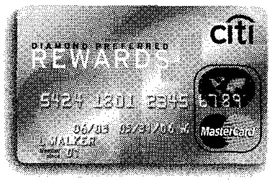
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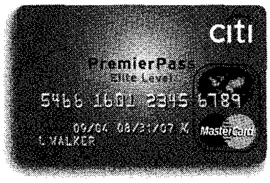
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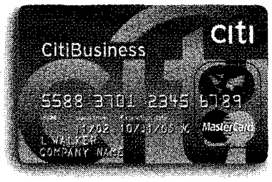
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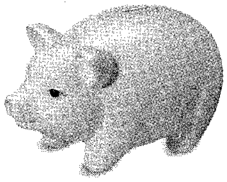

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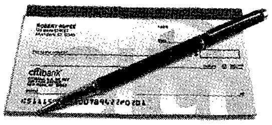

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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THE AMERICAN LIVING ROOM
The multidisciplinary festival at HERE Arts Center includes dozens of new works of theatre, dance, video, and less classifiable genres. It runs from July 20 to Aug. 21, beginning with the play "Still Life with Runner," by Steven Gridley, about two brothers: one who runs in races and one who no longer can, after being injured in a car accident. (145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444.)

ARLECCHINO, SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS
The Piccolo Teatro di Milano presents the late Giorgio Strehler's production of Goldoni's commedia-dell'arte classic, July 20-23. Part of the Lincoln Center Festival. For full festival schedule, visit www.lincolncenter.org. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500.)

DEDICATION OR THE STUFF OF DREAMS
Nathan Lane, Alison Fraser, and Marian Seldes star in a new play by Terrence McNally, about an idealistic couple who yearn to buy a theatre in upstate New York from a cantankerous former starlet. A Primary Stages production. Michael Morris directs. Previews begin July 26. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

LENNON
A musical portrait of the life and songs of John Lennon comes to Broadway with a cast that features multiple Lennons, including Will Chase and Terrence Mann; Julie Danao-Salkin plays Yoko Ono. Written and directed by Don Scardino. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

MIDTOWN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
The summer series presents more than fifty shows, at five venues, including a musical about Gen-X apathy, a comedy about a moth infestation, and a drama about artists in Hell's Kitchen. July 18-Aug. 7. For full festival schedule, visit www.midtownfestival.org. (212-868-4444.)

OEDIPUS AT PALM SPRINGS
Leigh Silverman directs the Five Lesbian Brothers in their first new production in eight years—a sendup of Greek tragedies. Previews begin July 20. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME!
The Irish Repertory Theatre revives Brian Friel's 1964 play about a man who travels to America to seek solace for the heartache he suffered in Ballybeg. Ciarán O'Reilly directs. In previews. Opens July 21 at 7. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

SWITCH TRIPTYCH
A new drama by Adriano Shaplin, about New York switchboard operators in 1919, fills the third week of the Soho Think Tank's Ice Factory '05 festival. Presented by the Riot Group. July 20-23 at 7. For festival schedule, visit www.sohothinktank.org. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

NOW PLAYING

THE BLONDE IN THE THUNDERBIRD
Suzanne Somers, the television icon of the nineteen-seventies, brings her one-woman musical autobiography to Broadway. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

THE CONSTANT WIFE
A splendid revival by the Roundabout Theatre Company of W. Somerset Maugham's 1926 drawing-room comedy. Lynn Redgrave shines as the right and very honorable Mrs. Culver, a woman who is not afraid to speak her mind and who does so with élan. Kate Burton plays her daughter Constance, whose doctor husband of fifteen years (Michael Cumpsty) is having an affair with Marie-Louise (Kathryn Meisle)—Constance's best friend. "The Constant Wife" is Oscar Wilde lite, but no matter. Everything about this production is such a pleasure—from Allen Moyer's set design and Michael Krass's costumes to Mark Brokaw's impeccable direction—that the hackneyed plot and loopy logic barely register. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/27/05.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. Through Aug. 14.)

LE DERNIER CARAVANSÉRAIL (ODYSSÉES)
Ariane Mnouchkine's epic recounting of the real stories of modern-day refugees searching for a sense of home. Created collectively by Le Théâtre du Soleil, with music by Jean-Jacques Lemêtre. Presented in two parts: "The Cruel River" and "Origins and Destinies." (Lincoln Center Festival, Damrosch Park. 212-721-6500. Through July 31.)

DRUMSTRUCK
Catharsis comes in many forms, but on a hot summer evening, there's nothing quite like banging on a *djembe*, keeping time with an ensemble of master African drummers and dancers. In this show from Johannesburg, each audience member is provided with a two-foot-tall drum, which the spirited performers demonstrate how to use to exhilarating effect. Highlights of this evening of traditional rhythms and music include a percussive dance from the Gauteng gold mines and the song "Jikele Maweni," a full-throated ballad made famous by Miriam Makeba. David Warren directs. (340 W. 50th St. 212-279-4200.)

EAST TO EDINBURGH
In the second year of the festival at 59E59, fifteen new American plays get a trial run before they appear in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe later this summer. For full schedule, visit www.59e59.org. (59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through July 31.)

FATAL ATTRACTION: A GREEK TRAGEDY
A hammy retelling of the 1987 film, complete with bad perms, a boiled bunny who rises from the grave for a dance break, and a portentous Greek chorus. Corey Feldman makes his stage début in the Michael Douglas role, while Alana McNair and Kate Wilkinson, who adapted the show from the original, stand in for Glenn Close and Anne Archer. Much of the comedy hinges on the debatable view that the movie demonizes businesswomen, and at times the satire wears thin. But Feldman carries the show with his gruff, spirited impersonation. Timothy Haskell ("I Love Paris") directs. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

PRIMO
Antony Sher plays the Italian chemist and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi in the New York run of London's National Theatre production of this biographical drama, which is based on Levi's experiences at Auschwitz. Of the London show, our critic John Lahr wrote: "Levi is a witness to the Holocaust, and, as Antony Sher expertly plays him, his presence has a quiet, commanding urgency." (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Aug. 7.)

THE SKIN GAME
John Galsworthy's melodrama about class conflict opened in 1920, but its depiction of the real-estate magnate Hornblower (the vigorous James Gale), whose voracious investments win him no friends among the local gentry, is topical enough in a city where the letters T-R-U-M-P gleam like gold from many a high perch. The well-born Hillcrests (John C. Vennema and Monique Fowler) resort to blackmail to humble their foe, whose factories threaten to mar the beauty of their estate. Although the performers enjoy mixed success with Galsworthy's overblown dialogue, a public auction scene, in which a fey aristocrat wrangles with an aggressive commoner, crackles with tension. Eleanor Reissa directs. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231. Through Aug. 14.)

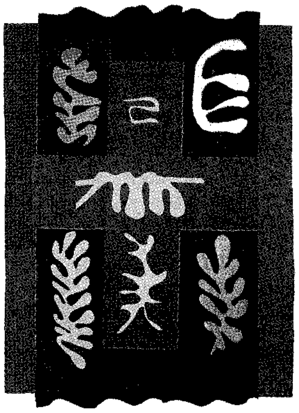
SUMMER PLAY FESTIVAL
Now in its second year, this festival showcases new work by sixteen playwrights from the United States and the United Kingdom. For full schedule, visit www.spfnyc.com. (Theatre Row, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through July 31.)

SWEET SONGS OF THE SOUL
An autobiographical play with music, performed by the singer Melba Moore and directed by Rhonda Passion Hansome. (Harry de Jur Playhouse, 466 Grand St. 212-279-4200.)

TWELFTH NIGHT
From its opening moments, in which Feste (Louis Butelli) makes a comic bit out of an attempt to hang himself, this thoughtful but uneven production by

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE FABRIC OF ART

What is a painting on canvas but a piece of decorated cloth? "Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams—His Art and His Textiles," a revelatory, achingly beautiful show with a weak title that is now at the Met, suggests the question. Items from the artist's personal fabric collection alternate with paintings and graphic works in which they play crucial roles. Hardly dreamy, Matisse's lifelong love of colored cloth—he was born in a weaver's cottage and raised in an industrial textile town—came wide awake once he realized its potency for modern painting, a discovery that proved as fecund, in its way, as Picasso's of African sculpture. What's the difference between a pattern and a picture of a pattern? Matisse played the ambiguity, producing structural surprises and setting up resonances of color so strong that you seem to hear, feel, taste, and smell them. The show also reflects back onto its source materials—such as Islamic design, whose principles have been termed "absolute surface" and "infinite relation."



—*Peter Schjeldahl*

the Aquila Theatre Company finds dark colors in the popular Shakespeare comedy. Feste becomes a Prospero-like stand-in for the playwright, doubling as the Captain who rescues Viola, setting the plot in motion. The girlish Lindsay Rae Taylor, as Viola, and the commanding Lisa Carter, as Olivia, bring a fresh dynamic to their scenes, and Kenn Sabberton as Malvolio looks amusingly constipated, but other parts of the play lag. Directed by Peter Meineck and Robert Richmond. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave., between 24th and 25th Sts. 212-279-4200.)

OUT OF TOWN

BAY STREET THEATRE
Tony Roberts and Derek Cecil star in a revival of Anthony Shaffer's "Sleuth" in the Hamptons, in a production helmed by the rising young director Will Frears. (Sag Harbor, N.Y. 631-725-9500. Through July 31.)

GOODSPEED MUSICALS
In 1954, Julie Andrews made her Broadway début in Sandy Wilson's spoof of nineteen-twenties musical comedies, "The Boy Friend"—playing a giddy English heiress who falls for a delivery boy. She now directs a revival of the play in Connecticut, which goes on national tour in the fall. (Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam, Conn. 860-873-8668.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
Through the poles of the tented outdoor stage at the Boscobel Restoration, theatregoers can see the lush trees of the Palisades and the glint of the Hudson. "The Tempest" is currently playing, and "Two Gentlemen of Verona" begins previews on July 20. (Cold Spring, N.Y. For more information, visit hvshakespeare.org. 845-265-9575.)

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL
Caryl Churchill's seminal play "Top Girls," about five noteworthy women and the sacrifices they made, is the next offering of the Massachusetts summer series and is directed by Jo Bonney. July 20-31. For full festival schedule, visit www.wtfestival.org. (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)

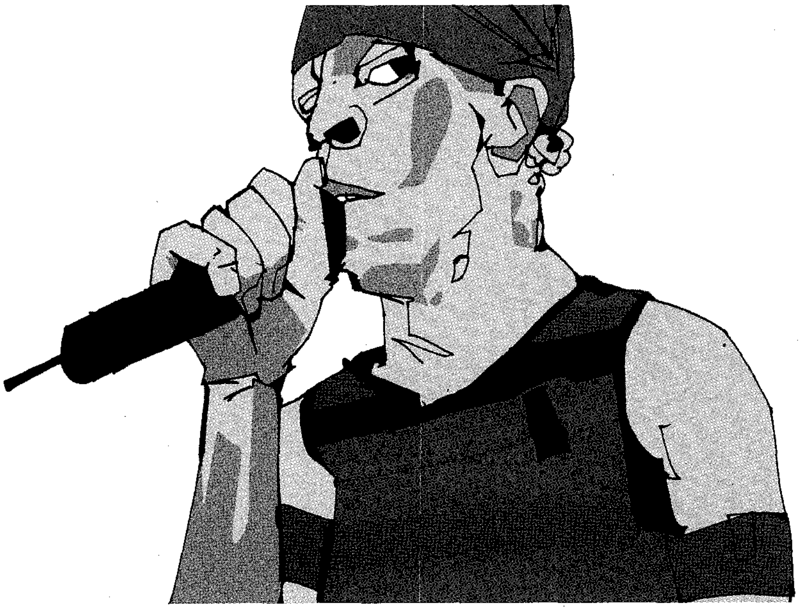
Also Playing

ALL SHOOK UP: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **ALTAR BOYZ:** Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BEAST ON THE MOON:** Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **BOOCOCK'S HOUSE OF BASEBALL:** Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. (Through July 23.) **BORDER/CLASH:** The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS:** Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **LAZER VAUDEVILLE:** Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544. **MANUSCRIPT:** Daryl Roth, 101 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **THE PARIS LETTER:** Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300. (Through Aug. 7.) **THE PILLOWMAN:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes July 31.) **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE TALK OF THE TOWN:** Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. 212-840-6800. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200. **WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?:** Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—July 20: **Adrian Belew,** a highly accomplished and eccentric guitar player, has backed the likes of Frank Zappa and David Bowie, all the while maintaining a distinctive solo career. His forthcoming release, "Side Two," is the second in a series in which he collaborates with Les Claypool, of Primus, on bass and Danny Carey, of Tool, on drums. July 21-22: The **Jaguares,** one of Mexico's most popular rock bands, have a lead vocalist, Saúl Hernández, who explores issues of Mexican identity and iconography with intense passion. The band's latest CD, "Cronicas de un Laberinto," was co-produced by Adrian Belew (see above). Later on July 22: The **Dan Band,** the Los Angeles group that rocked the movie "Old School." July 23-24: The **Raspberries,** arguably the preëminent American power-pop quartet, emerged from Cleveland, Ohio, in 1970, providing a bit of straight-ahead-pop relief in a decade otherwise ruled by glittery disco and bloated prog rock. Despite the band's classic hooks and celestial harmonies, huge success did not come calling, and they splintered. After years of rumor, speculation, and false starts, the original lineup of the Raspberries reconvened last year.



The reggae legend Yellowman (né Winston Foster) visits S.O.B.'s.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—July 21: **Coheed & Cambria** forge an unlikely combination of progressive-rock filigree and punk-rock intensity. The ambitious quartet specializes in complicated song titles, inventive arrangements, and high-pitched vocals that suggest an unhealthy intake of helium. July 22-23: **Teenage Fanclub.** The Scottish group made a big splash in the early nineties with guitar-based indie rock that recalled the hook-laden power pop of bands like Big Star and the Raspberries (see the B. B. King Blues Club & Grill). Their latest album, "Man-Made," flirts with experimental post-rock but still retains their signature melodicism.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—July 20: The high-voltage Afro-Cuban rhythms of the New York City collective **Yerba Buena.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—July 20: **Tinariwen** are a group of Tuareg tribesmen who once fought in Mali's civil war. They've since traded their rifles for guitars, and they practice bluesy rock with revolutionary fervor. July 24: The Australian folk outfit the **Waifs** is led by the singer-songwriter sisters Donna and Vikki Simpson. Its latest effort, "A Brief History," is replete with earthy guitar melodies, cheery harmonies, and hints of country twang. Sharing the stage is the Minnesota-based folkster **Ben Weaver,** whose eerie backwoods guitar and banjo tunes sound like a cross between Tom Waits and the Brothers Grimm.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—July 21: The Omaha-based indie-folk band **Neva Dinova** stops by with songs from its second album, "The Hate Yourself Change." It is full of country-tinged guitar work, minimalist ballads, and winsome lyrics that the front man, Jake Bellows, delivers in a trembling voice.

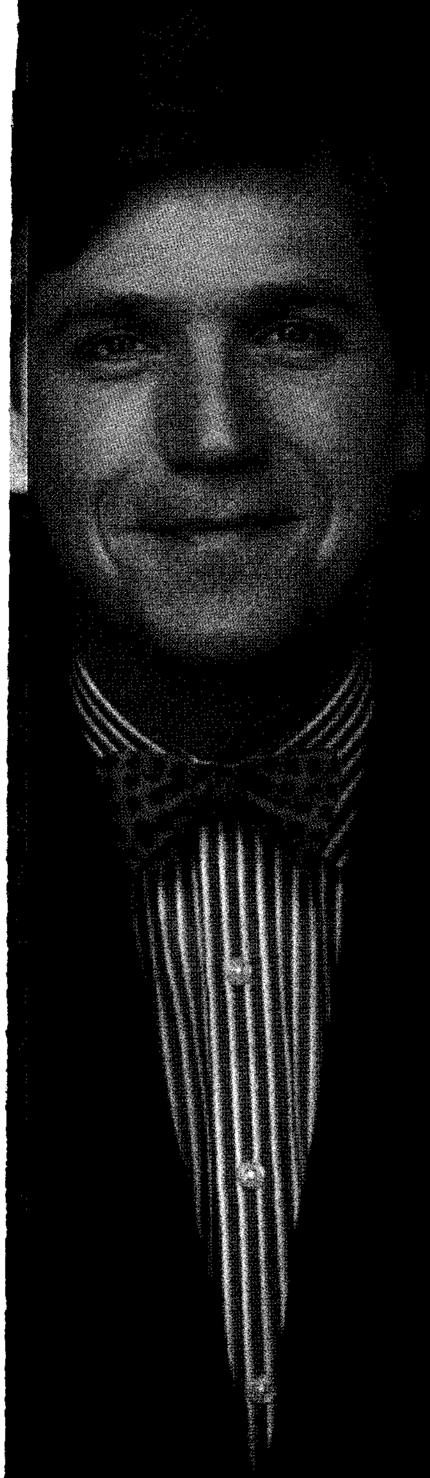
PIANOS
158 Ludlow St. (212-505-3733)—July 22: The New York City ensemble **Electric Turn to Me** plays thick and busy art rock overlaid with the Teutonic stylings of their front woman, Silke.

RIVER TO RIVER FESTIVAL
July 20: The all-girl rap trio **Northern State** (a.k.a. Hesta Prynn, Sprout, and Spero) hails from Long Island, and its members lyricize about body image, the Lower East Side, and A.T.M.s over retro beats and rocking instrumentals. (South Street Seaport.) July 20: The ebullient and commanding jazz violinist **Regina Carter.** (Rockefeller Park, Battery Park City.) (For more information, visit www.rivertorivernyc.com.)

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—July 21: A night of Irish music with **Dervish.**

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—July 21: **Basement Bhangra,** a long-running monthly party featuring ecstatic dance music that fuses an ancient Punjabi harvest festival with the technological wonders of underground London. July 24: The working-class Brazilian dance music of **Forró in the Dark.** July 26: Dancehall reggae with **Yellowman.**

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—The revered East Village rock promoter Tom Hyland takes over the club July 21-23 for the third annual "Dot Dash" festival. It opens with the hallowed Midwestern punk legends **Zero Boys.** Night two features **Los Reactors,** the Oklahoma-bred band that made a name for itself with high-energy, keyboard-driven songs like "Dead in the Suburbs," "Culture Shock," and "Laboratory Baby." They've reunited after being apart for more than twenty years (aside from a recent show in Tulsa). The final night features



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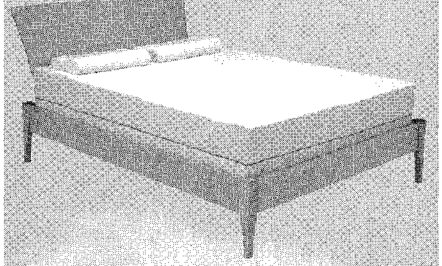

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a rare Stateside appearance by the feral Japanese punk rockers **Teengenerate.** Local garage punks round out the bills each night.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—July 22: **Lightning Bolt,** a decade-old noise-rock duo from Providence, Rhode Island, wears masks and performs from the back of the club, instead of the stage. They produce an uncompromising, punishing sound that can be repetitive, but it can also be surprising—the outbursts of melodic feedback or frenetic abstract jamming are like aural versions of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings.

he'll swing. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—July 22-23: **Jason Lindner,** a highly touted pianist, composer, and bandleader, stops by with his Progress Report ensemble.

"JAZZ IN JULY"
The pianist **Bill Charlap** makes his début as the musical director of this annual series on July 19 with an all-Gershwin program that mirrors his latest CD. A program entitled "Continuum," on July 20, brings Charlap together with a glittering array of his fellow-pianists, including **Hank Jones, Ray Bryant, Mulgrew Miller,** and **Renee Rosnes. Jim Hall,** the poet laureate of jazz guitarists, gets fêted on July 21. He'll be joined by Charlap, the guitarist **Peter Bernstein,** the trumpeter **Tom Harrell,** and a string section. On July 26, Charlap teams up with the wonderfully sardonic songwriter and expert pianist **Dave Frishberg** for a Hoagy Carmichael program. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Through July 28.)

TABLES FOR TWO
ALTO

520 Madison Ave., at 53rd St. (212-308-1099)—In many ways, this new restaurant is more like a secret temple than a mere eatery. The entrance is really on Fifty-third Street, just past a graffitied slab of the Berlin Wall. The dining room is sunk slightly below street level and windowless—instead, there are ceiling-high glass cases filled with wine bottles. And there are the reverent tones of the waiters and the ardor of the diners for the chef, Scott Conant, who got his start at restaurants like San Domenico and Chianti before moving on to his own place, L'Impero. "We've been following your career from the beginning," a silver-haired woman informed Conant recently, as he took one of his regular turns around the place.

There's also the slightest sense of déjà vu, from the cuisine (vaguely Germanic), the atmosphere (sombrely suited waitstaff toting domed dishes), and the sleek lines of the table settings, all of which one can also find a few blocks away at the Modern. Still, Conant has a deft touch for dishes that, if somewhat contrived in their complexity, are undeniably exquisite. Amuse-bouches set the tone: an oyster decked out in horseradish foam, crunchy apples, and red-beet vinegar and a silky almond gazpacho with muscat grapes and scallops were surprisingly subtle enticements. A soft polenta appetizer studded with snails, truffles, and asparagus spears was as delicate as it was earthy. Dishes that, on the page, seemed weighted by a cavalcade of luxurious elements—like raviolini filled with ricotta di bufala and accompanied by an asparagus-tarragon sauce, Pecorino, and a beef glacé—turned out to have an ethereal lightness. "It's the essence of the sea," a server whispered one evening, describing a sea-urchin foam, but one could apply the same formula elsewhere. *Strangolapreti,* a superb spinach-infused gnocchi, might be the essence of the potato, while a past offering of tagliatelle with cockscomb and tripe might be the essence of the farm. The desserts, created by Patti Jackson, are uniformly excellent: a recent offering of early cherries, served with a silky *biancomangiare,* a sweet frangipane, and a flaky almond croquant, inspired its own hosannas. (Open Mondays through Fridays for lunch and dinner and Saturdays for dinner. Prix-fixe dinner menu $72.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—July 21: The **Kaiser Chiefs** are a backward-looking British outfit that borrows liberally from the sneering aggression of bands like the Jam.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—July 19-23: The **Count Basie Orchestra.** The Count himself and the star soloists and arrangers who brought the Basie band fame are a distant memory, but as long as the ensemble, now under the direction of Grover Mitchell, keeps its brass barking and the rhythm airborne, the legacy of Kansas City swing is still intact.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—The **Cecil Taylor** trio has the stage July 19-20. Popular taste usually catches up with jazz innovators; the cases of Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman spring to mind. But Taylor still sounds as visionary and disruptive, as poetic and discursive, as he must have back in 1957, when he first startled the staid jazz scene with his outright rejection of standard rhythms and formalized improvisatory ploys, not to mention his liberal and terrifying use of tonal clusters and other outré devices adapted from modern classical music.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—July 21-24: The old-school crooner **Buddy Greco** never met a standard he couldn't bring to life, and his jazz background (he played piano with Benny Goodman's band in the late forties) insures that

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—July 20: The **Rudresh Mahanthappa** quartet, featuring **Vijay Iyer.** On his recordings with the keyboard dervish Iyer, the alto saxophonist Mahanthappa has a grab-you-by-the-collar attack that dares the listener to turn away. Iyer's **Fieldwork** ensemble, which features the ingenious pianist and composer along with the saxophonist **Steve Lehman** and the drummer **Tyshawn Sorey,** is here the following night. The group has a new album, "Simulated Progress." July 22: **Louis Hayes' Cannonball Adderley Legacy Band.** Now that Cannonball's brother, Nat Adderley, is gone, there's no one better to lead a tribute band honoring the effervescent alto saxophonist than the drummer Hayes, the swinging motor behind the Adderley unit during its glory days. July 25: The exceptional Cuban guitarist **Juan-Carlos Formell** celebrates the release of his new record, "Cemeteries & Desire."

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—July 20: **Claire Daly,** a robust baritone saxophonist closely associated with the band People Like Us, steps up with her own quartet to pay tribute to the tenor titan Dexter Gordon.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—The tenor saxophonist **Jimmy Greene** (here with his quintet July 19-24) apprenticed with Horace Silver and is a regular with Tom Harrell's band, which accounts for the authentic execution and conviction of his hard-bop outings. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams, His Art and His Textiles."** Through Sept. 25. ♦ **"All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860."** Through Aug. 21. ♦ Two recent installations are on view in **"Tony Oursler at the Met: 'Studio' and 'Climaxed.' "** The first contemplates the influences at work on the artist through an assemblage of pieces by the likes of Jacqueline Humphries, Rem Koolhaas, and Kaare Rafoss. The second, more traditional Oursler work is a giant, lumpy potato head with flames and a blinky face projected on it, its mouth voicing demented and hilarious threats, boasts, and sorrows. Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"Chanel,"** a retrospective of designs from the couture house. Through Aug. 7. ♦ **"John Townsend: Newport Cabinetmaker"** presents a few dozen pieces by a prominent Colonial American furniture-maker alongside work by his contemporaries. Through Sept. 25. ♦ **"Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls, and Twirls."** A summer installation in the roof garden of five spiky stalagmite sculptures and a wall drawing. Through Oct. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

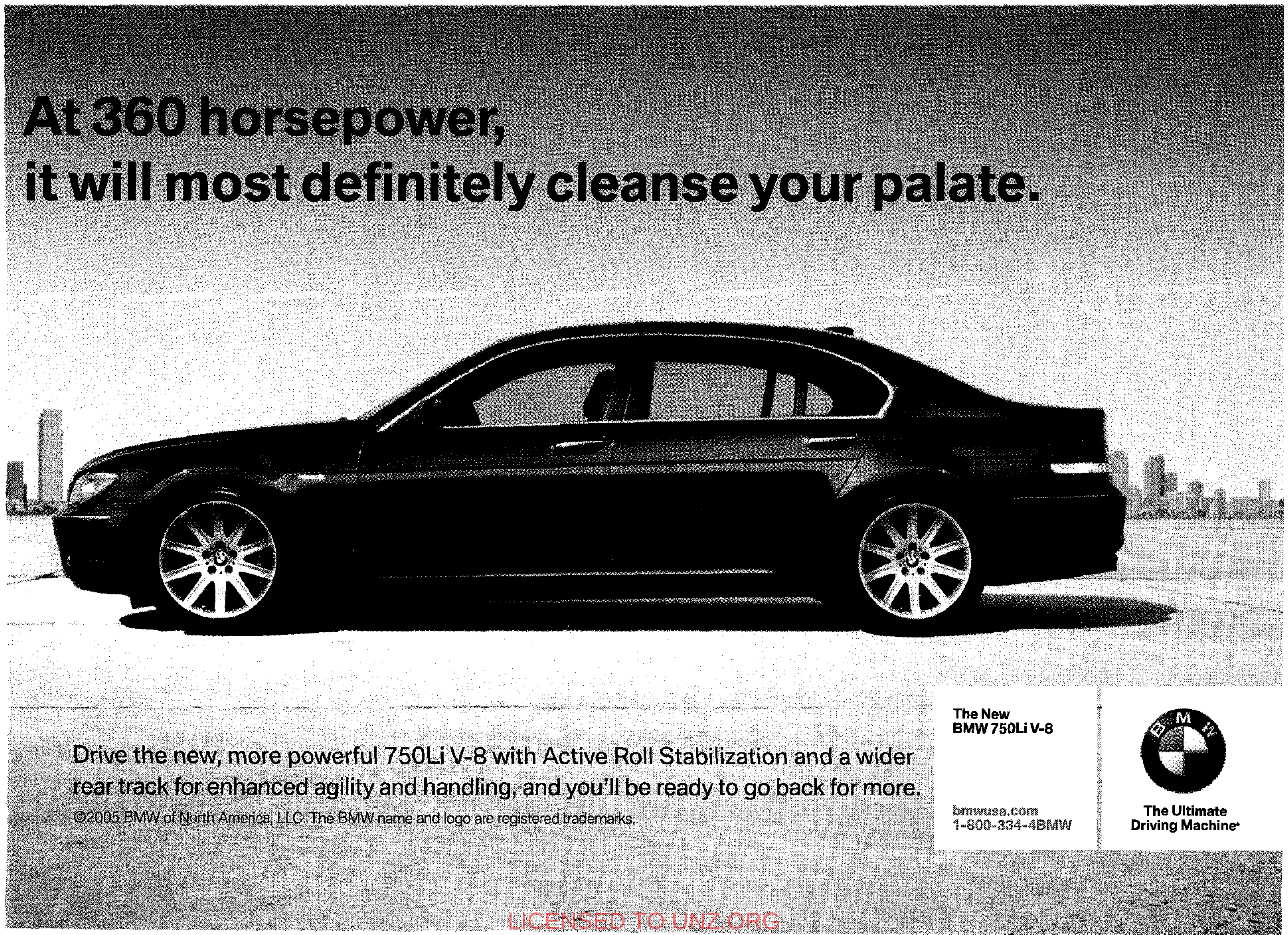
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro, 1865-1885"** chronicles the careers of two friends who gave each other a leg up into brave new styles and techniques, though it quickly becomes clear how much farther Cézanne, the younger artist by a decade, vaulted. Through Sept. 12. ♦ **"Friedlander,"** a major retrospective of the work of the photographer Lee Friedlander (born 1934). Through Aug. 29. ♦ **"The High Line"** details Field Operations and Diller Scofidio & Renfro's ambitious urban rails-to-trails scheme for the abandoned elevated tracks that run along the West Side from Gansevoort to Thirty-fourth Street. Through Oct. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition: Photographs and Mannerist Prints."** When he wasn't investigating S & M's lower depths, Mapplethorpe could be downright old school, carrying on the modernist traditions of Weston, Steichen, and Platt Lynes, as well as that of Hollywood glamour portraiture. In this exceptionally handsome show, the photographer's most self-conscious references to the classic nude have been hung alongside late-sixteenth-century Flemish Mannerist prints. The juxtapositions are clever but never particularly revealing. Both Mapplethorpe and the Mannerists were echoing earlier sources; running along parallel tracks here, they never really meet or combust, and the resulting chill in the air dampens nearly all their combined erotic heat. Through Aug. 24. ♦ **"Oteiza: Myth and Modernism."** A retrospective of sculpture, drawing, and collage by the Basque artist Jorge Oteiza (1908-2003). Through Aug. 24. ♦ **"Art of Tomorrow: Hilla Rebay and Solomon R. Guggenheim."** Through Aug. 10. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—**"Robert Smithson,"** a retrospective of drawings, constructions, and collages, includes filmed, photographed, and sketched documentation of the iconic "Spiral Jetty." Through Oct. 23. ♦ **"Remote Viewing: Invented Worlds in Recent Painting and Drawing,"** work by eight artists, including Terry Winters, Ati Maier, and Matthew Ritchie. Through Oct. 9. ♦ The eclectic gathering of works from the permanent collection in **"Landscape"** ranges from Jasper Johns's white maps to Ed Ruscha's rows of L.A. streets to Roni Horn's eerie comparison of the body and the earth, "Becoming a Landscape" (1999-2001). Through Sept. 18. ♦ **"Banks Violette: Untitled"** contemplates the romantic sublime with a model of a ruined church cast in salt, backed with music by the black-metal musician Snorre Ruch. Through Oct. 2. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Monet's London: Artists' Reflections on the Thames, 1859-1914"** includes Claude Monet's signature melting views of the Waterloo and Charing Cross Bridges, Whistler's "Thames Set" etchings (1859-1860), and works by Winslow Homer, Childe Hassam, and André Derain, among others. Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"Michelangelo of the Menagerie: Bronze Works by Antoine-Louis Barye."** Through July 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—**"Self and Subject,"** a roundup of portraits featuring a veritable *Who's Who* of American outsider artists—or, if you prefer, self-taught or folk artists. What's immediately obvious to the seasoned follower of "mainstream" contemporary art is that these pieces by Grandma Moses, Bill Traylor, Sister Gertrude Morgan, and Henry Darger look uncannily like the doodly, craft-oriented work being churned out by younger artists who've gone through the official channels and paid dearly for their M.F.A.s. Subversive curating? Perhaps. But items like Howard Finster's layered-glass



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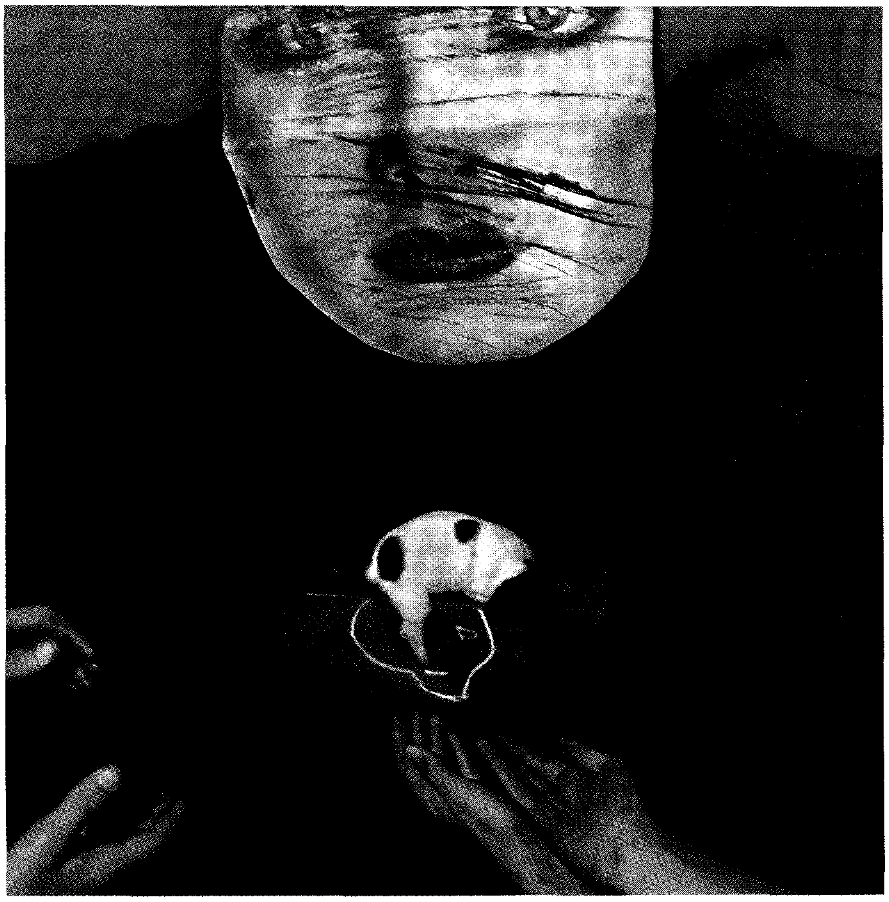


"Compassion" (2004), by Roger Ballen, at Gagosian.

painting "Vision of a Space City," or Ray Materson's baseball cards for Ted Williams, Joe DiMaggio, and Hideki Matsui, embroidered out of threads from unravelled socks, are as weirdly imaginative and wonderful as anything in Chelsea. Through Sept. 11. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 7:30.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance"** is a thrilling show, quick to stoke imagination and amazement. Items on view include wing suits for skydivers, fast-deploying webs for riot control, and the Tumbleweed, a giant computerized beach ball that follows the wind on Mars, periodically deflating to collect data. Through Oct. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 9; Saturdays, 10 to 6; and Sundays, noon to 6.)

DRAWING CENTER
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—**"Zoe Keramea: Geometry of Paradox."** Keramea's paper sculptures suggest both the obsessive self-entertainment of children's folded-paper fortune-tellers and the abstract formal investigation of mathematical models for Euclidean solids. Her drawings and prints pursue related analyses of line, volume, curve, and density. All the work relies on an elegant palette of black, white, charcoal gray, and silky silver, but the two-dimensional format turns her geometries representational, while the sculptures remain pleasingly literal in their torsions and extensions of what appears to be simple, planar space. Through July 30. ♦ **"Wall-to-Wall Drawings: Selections Summer 2005."** Through July 30. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"From Callot to Greuze: French Drawings from Weimar."** Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Wild Things: The Art of Maurice Sendak."** Through Aug. 14. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays, 11 to 8; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
Temporarily located in the Chelsea Art Museum, 556 W. 22nd St. (212-219-1222)—The Dutch artist Aernout Mik specializes in elaborate, extravagant, and extraordinarily well-produced video installations. **"Refraction,"** shot in Romania, captures the movements of emergency workers and gawkers at a staged bus crash. Crystalline images are projected against a long white wall, constructed to mimic the shape of the overturned bus. The video fetishizes the aesthetics of safety and disaster: bright, colorful uniforms and expensive equipment; earnest and skilled activity; fear and concern contrasted with the "natural" indifference of a herd of sheep who overrun the road at the nexus of the "accident." But there are no victims here—actual or actors—and the empty activity at the core starts to ripple outward. The deflating sense of urgency translates into a work that feels more flat than frantic or compelling. Through Sept. 10. ♦ **"Rhizome Artbase 101."** Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Greater New York 2005,"** work by more than a hundred and sixty artists from around the city who have emerged in the past five years. Through Sept. 26. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

QUEEN SOFÍA SPANISH INSTITUTE
684 Park Ave., at 68th St. (212-628-0420)—In **"From Goya to Sorolla,"** a roomful of nineteenth-century paintings reads like a single thread pulled from the cloth of the European salon tradition; a vitrine of small Goya drawings can be viewed as intimately as if they were in a private home. Large-scale paintings are gathered in a room upstairs, and a long gallery in the basement includes some early-twentieth-century works. Through July 30. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 to 6, Fridays, 10 to 8, and Saturdays, 11 to 5.)

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM
12 Fulton St., at Water St. (212-748-8600)—Walt Whitman, as he himself proclaimed, was large; he contained multitudes. **"Walt Whitman and the Promise of America"** accordingly describes a wide slice of life in Brooklyn and Manhattan's Five Points during the later nineteenth century. Treasures include a first edition of "Leaves of Grass," a pair of the poet's large and battered boots, and some eminently touching letters he wrote on behalf of wounded soldiers during his service as a Civil War nurse. There are also ephemera, like a case of movable type such as Walt would have used in his newspapering days; a Civil War-era surgeon's field kit; a screening of "Manhatta," Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's 1921 film juxtaposing images of the modern island with passages from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; and period costumes worn by Cameron Diaz and Leonardo DiCaprio in "Gangs of New York." In the Schermerhorn Row Galleries. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

ROGER BALLEN AND ALEC SOTH
Although this pairing of photographs—Ballen's made in the slums of Johannesburg, Soth's at various stops along the Mississippi River—appears gratuitous, it's rooted in more than a shared eye for vernacular interiors and their eccentric inhabitants. That both Ballen and Soth have a genuine interest in marginalized lives isn't especially evident here, so their superficial stylistic similarities end up looking like frail hooks for a show. Still, the work itself is strong and, in Ballen's case, challenging. His starkly staged psychodramas suggest Beckett in Bedlam, mixing grotesquerie and hilarity in near-lethal doses. Through July 29. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111.)

WILLIAM EGGLESTON
Eggleston, the Memphis-based maverick known primarily as a pioneering and influential color photographer, has been bringing his early-seventies black-and-white work out of the closet recently. This group of portraits, taken in local dives with a specially rigged view camera and infrared film, feels like a funky, down-home version of Walker Evans's surreptitious shots of New York subway riders. Because many of Eggleston's subjects—good old boys, party girls, truckers, musicians, goofballs—are unaware of his camera, the results are gritty, moody, and pungent. Uncharacteristically large prints undermine the work's intimacy and intensity, but that doesn't dim these flashbacks. Through Sept. 2. (Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.)

FARRAR HOOD
The sleeping woman spied upon is the unoriginal subject for Hood's noirish, hyperrealist paintings, which look like advertisements for psychological complexity rather than the eerie thing itself. Sprawled on a bare mattress in the ferns, curled in the bathtub with clothes on, wrapped in a rumple of sheets, or collapsed in an armchair whose floral upholstery clashes with the patterned wallpaper, the surrealist poster girls gathered under the group title "Somnolence" are meant to be alluring yet disturbing in the manner of all voyeuristic objects. Through Aug. 6. (Spike, 547 W. 20th St. 212-627-4100.)

KARIN WEINER
Weiner's gentle take on the forging of the Western frontier includes a pile of fabric antlers, photo-collages of women with horns and antlers attached to their heads, a roomful of calico clouds, and "Campfire Karaoke," an installation of skillfully crafted cardboard logs, a rag rug, a soundtrack of cowboy songs, and a television displaying a flickering campfire. Fusing "women's work"

craft with elements of the rough-and-tumble ranch life style, Weiner achieves an amiable balance of the sexes. Through July 29. (ZieherSmith, 531 W. 25th St. 212-229-1088.)

"MIRAGE"

This superb group show unfolds slowly in works that demand a little time. The Atlas Group's sixteen-minute video centers on a docudramatic interview with an actor portraying Souheil Bachar, a Lebanese kidnapped in Beirut in 1983 and detained for ten years. Emily Jacir's video of an open desert road is paired with music chosen by Palestinians who answered the question "If you had an hour to drive, with no Israeli checkpoints, what song would you listen to?" (Fairuz tops the list, but Metallica, Jimi Hendrix, and Sinatra make appearances.) On the lighter side are Isa Genzken's tower of architectural photos and Robert Kinmont's conceptual photographs of himself doing handstands in eight natural settings—including, of course, the desert. Through July 29. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. 212-367-7474.)

"POST NO BILLS"/GREG SMITH/ ANTHONY CAMPUZANO/ALEKSANDRA MIR/INVENTORY/JOSH SHADDOCK

No less than six—count them, six—shows and projects occupy the gallery's modest space. Some of them are as simple as Mir's "The Most Beautiful Thing Today," a regular update in terse textual form (e.g., "A small baby screaming in a loud bar"). Others are more sprawling, like the curator Matthew Higgs's show of artists' posters ("Post No Bills"), which includes recent efforts from the Guerrilla Girls, John Waters, and Scott King. There's also a room-size introduction to the work of the English collective Inventory, Shaddock's bulletin-board display of a joke with the punch line obscured, and Smith's wonderfully zany "Gargoyles" video, which captures him hanging out a tenement window into an airshaft. Through July 23. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212.)

DANCE

BOLSHOI BALLET

Moscow's storied ballet company visits New York, along with the full Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, in the company's first appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House since 1987. The season features the North American premières of "The Bright Stream" (a Soviet-era ballet set on a collective farm, with a score composed by Shostakovich) and "The Pharaoh's Daughter," choreographed by Petipa in 1862, to music by Cesare Pugni. Also playing are "Don Quixote" and Yuri Grigorovich's "Spartacus." ♦ July 18-21 at 8: "Don Quixote." ♦ July 22 at 8 and July 23 at 2 and 8: "Spartacus." ♦ July 25-26 at 8: "The Bright Stream." (Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 30.)

SHEN WEI DANCE ARTS

In the new work "Map," the Chinese-born choreographer arrives at a pure, pared-down vocabulary—bouncing, rotational movement and Tai Chi-based circular motions. Blank-faced and simply dressed, Shen's dancers roll and careen across the floor, battling to keep pace with an urgent, insistent choral score by Steve Reich. The program also includes "Near the Terrace Part I," a work from 2000, set to music by Arvo Pärt. (Lincoln Center Festival, New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500. July 19 and July 23 at 8 and July 24 at 7.)

RANDOM DANCE

The British company, headed by the choreographer Wayne McGregor, makes its Lincoln Center Festival début with the multimedia dance work "AtaXia," which explores how a neurological condition might interfere with a dancer's ability to control his movement. The score—"Trance," by Michael Gordon of Bang on a Can—is performed live by the cutting-edge new-music group Icebreaker. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500. July 21-22 at 8.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA

Martín Santangelo, the artistic director of this Spanish troupe, aims at a spare aesthetic, which has become more naked and intimate with each production. Such soul baring is best appreciated up close and unamplified, which makes the small, down-at-heel Theatre 80 an ideal venue. This time around, the extraordinary Soledad Barrio is the lone woman, sharing the stage with the dancers Santangelo, Antonio Rodriguez, and Bruno Argenta, plus four musicians. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101. July 20-21 at 7:30, July 22-23 at 7:30 and 10, and July 24 at 5. Through July 31.)

"BOUNCE"

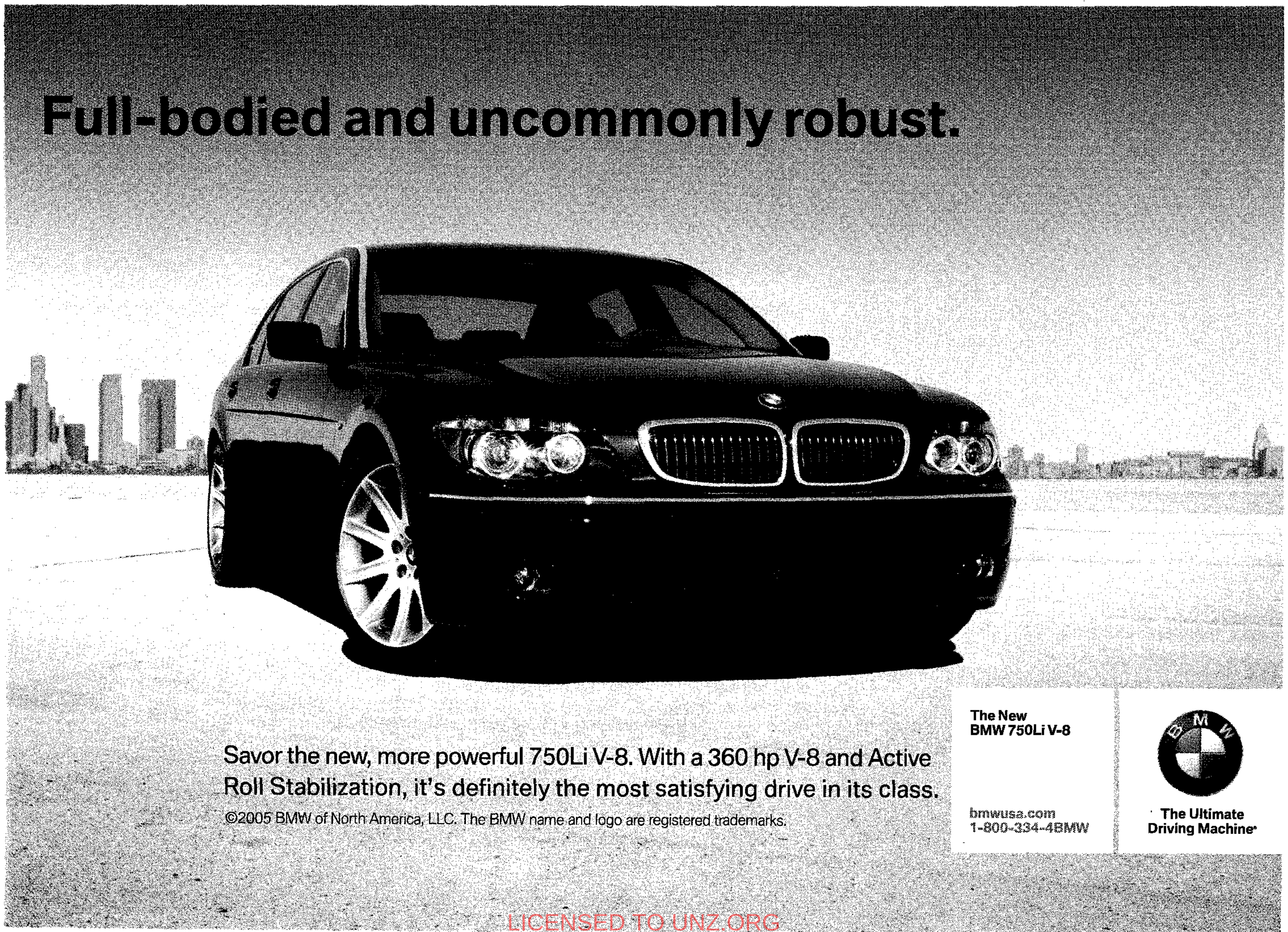
In previous incarnations, this high-spirited romp from the choreographer Eva Dean was entitled "Balls, Balls, Balls" and "Oh Balls!" In the course of the show, the flexible all-female cast stretches, leaps, dives, and balances over scores of brightly colored balls. Here, in a suite of interconnected dances, Dean deploys her orbs on the beach, where they feature in a bathing-beauty number; in a mystical moon garden, in which they stand in for planets, and in a cascading, bouncing waterfall. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. July 20-22 at 7:30, July 23 at 2 and 7:30, and July 24 at 2. Through July 31.)

BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY

The choreographer Bill T. Jones drops the pensive multimedia collage "Another Evening" into the party atmosphere of Central Park's SummerStage. Still, Jones's text-rich piece has the plainspoken but provocative energy of an exceptionally good poetry slam, and a d.j. backs Daniel Bernard Roumain as he performs his own score for acoustic and electric violin. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777. No tickets necessary. July 22 at 8:30.)

PILOBOLUS

Dangling from harnesses and silks, the company's contortionists fly through the air in "Suspended," which opens July 18 and is the third of three rotat-



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ing programs at the Joyce. The others are the undersea spectacle "Aquatic" and the rocking evening-length program "Megawatt > Full Strength," which features the New York première of "BUGonia," set to an original score by Ed Bilous, in which two entwined bodies form a weird plant-animal hybrid. For complete schedule, see www.joyce.org. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 18-22 and July 25-26 at 8 and July 23 at 2 and 8. Through Aug. 6.)

MUGIYONO KASIDO

The son of shadow-puppet masters, Mugiyono Kasido trained as a classical Javanese court dancer before taking up choreography. Both backgrounds are on display in his sinuous performances at the Lincoln Center Festival. (Clark Studio Theatre. 212-721-6500. July 18-20 at 8.)

"TO ONE I SAW SMALL"

South Pleasant Company presents a comic movement-theatre piece by Cristina Septien, about the mixed-up life of a spelling-bee champ named Ruthie. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 212-352-7112. July 22-24 at 9. Through July 30.)

"ALL FOR LOVE"

A longtime mentee of Gregory Hines, Andrew Nemr is one of the hardest-working tap dancers in the generation younger than Savion Glover. "All for Love," his début as choreographer, tells an old-fashioned story—guy finds girl, guy loses girl, guy gets a second chance—through up-to-date tapping. Like "Movin' Out," the show gets narrative help from song lyrics—in this case, the sentiments of Luther Vandross, Ray Charles, Nirvana, and others. Nemr's ensemble is called C.P.D. Plus—"C.P.D." stands for "Cats Paying Dues," which says everything about the seriousness of the young cast. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. July 22-23 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW

Garth Fagan Dance returns to the Ted Shawn Theatre with three recent pieces, while the Mexican troupe A Poc A Poc makes its U.S. début in the Doris Duke Studio Theatre. "Dance*collage*forromie," Fagan's tribute to the artist Romare Bearden, is a patchwork of odd, lovely shapes. "Translation Transition" seeks similar effects, juxtaposing ska and reggae with jazz, whereas in last year's "- - - -ing," the only contrast is between the Brahms score and Fagan's vocabulary, itself a mélange of Afro-Caribbean dance and ballet. A Poc A Poc displays its sleek, European aesthetic in "Amor Udri," an arresting study of the many forms that passion can take. The following week, the Pillow regular Mark Morris Dance Group presents some of the choreographer's classics, along with strong recent works. "Rock of Ages," set to Schubert's Adagio in E-Flat, is a brief, minimal quartet, and "All Fours," set to Bartók's String Quartet No. 4, is dramatic and large-scaled; both works exhibit his famed musicality. Fagan: July 20-22 at 8, July 23 at 2 and 8, and July 24 at 2. A Poc A Poc: July 21-22 at 8:15, July 23 at 2:15 and 8:15, and July 24 at 5. Morris: July 26 at 8 (through July 31). (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745.)

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

The company's repertory season at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center continues. For full schedule, visit www.spac.org. (Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 518-587-3330. Through July 23.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
CONCERTS IN TOWN

INTERNATIONAL KEYBOARD INSTITUTE AND FESTIVAL

Jerome Rose's annual festival, a boon to the city's piano aficionados, returns with an impressive lineup of major artists offering concerts and master classes; some highlights follow. July 20 at 8: Ursula Oppens, a superbly disciplined pianist admired for her work in both the traditional and contemporary repertories, performs Rzewski's "Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues" and Nancarrow's "Two Canons for Ursula" alongside masterworks by Beethoven (the Op. 26 and Op. 27 Sonatas) and Ravel. ♦ July 23 at 4: The noted new-music specialist Jay Gottlieb offers a concert-lecture with performances of works by Ives, Scelsi, Wolpe, Messiaen (two of the "Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus"), and Adams ("Phrygian Gates"). ♦ July 23 at 8: Earl Wild, the ageless Romantic virtuoso, bounds through music by Beethoven and Liszt (along with improvisations on themes suggested by the audience). ♦ July 26 at 8: An all-Liszt concert (including transcriptions from operas by Mozart and Meyerbeer) performed by an authoritative interpreter, Leslie Howard. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 212-580-0210, ext. 4858. For full schedule, see www.ikif.org.)

POP NOTES
CLOSET CASE

The R. & B. singer/songwriter/performer/producer R. Kelly is not the first major pop star to be accused of sexual misconduct with a minor—or even the most famous—but he is quite likely the least embarrassed. Since Kelly's June, 2002, indictment on child-pornography charges, he has not shied away from sexuality; moreover, he has been converting the negative attention into creative energy at an alarming rate. Kelly's prolific output may be meant to distract us from the charges, or it could simply be an attempt to fill shelves before he goes away. Whatever his motive, Kelly is neither apologizing nor playing the victim; his recent work feels like a Bible-study session crossed with a very lurid soap opera.

On his last album, Kelly recorded a song called "3-Way Phone Call," an explicitly Christian, seven-minute-long discussion with his sister and her "prayer buddy" of the nature of (his) sin. On Kelly's new album, **"TP-3 Reloaded"** (Jive), the conversation has become a screenplay. He has introduced the album with a single—though that's not exactly the right term—that seems to think its competition is not other popular music but "War of the Worlds." "Trapped in the Closet" is a sixteen-minute song in five connected chapters, and it is the most audacious, crass, and compelling thing on commercial radio right now. As the story begins, Kelly's first-person narrator, caught in bed with a woman, hides in her bedroom closet. A creepy farce ensues that includes a gunshot, gender switching, a policeman, an ill-timed leg cramp, and more one-liners than you'd expect ("There's a reason I'm in this closet / He says 'Yeah? What are you—talking clothes?' "). The ending can't be spoiled because no one knows it—the resolution may hinge on a woman named Tina who is only mentioned in passing.

Kelly has hinted that there are five more chapters coming down the pike, but the most radical thing about "Trapped in the Closet" is not the story. It's the music. The pace is slow, more dirge than ballad, and the backing music consists of one repeating piano arpeggio tied to a minimal bass line. As each chapter builds, the strings and timpani swell, emphasizing the non-obvious narrative turns in a pleasingly obvious way. Kelly's singing dispenses with traditional song form: he simply goes and goes and goes, telling his story with such heedless narrative momentum that he doesn't even have time for a chorus. There are lovely melodic figures that recur, roughly in the same sequence, but never the same way twice. The results are suspended between John Coltrane's open-ended searching and gospel's time-honored combination of improvisation and hamminess. Kelly may be going to hell (or, sooner, jail), but he's insuring that when he gets there, the jukebox will be stocked.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

The life and thought of the philosopher Walter Benjamin would seem to be an ideal subject for the British composer Brian Ferneyhough, whose elegantly hypercomplex style mimics the multilayered richness of philosophical discourse. "Shadowtime," a "thought opera" (with a libretto by Charles Bernstein) that begins with Benjamin's suicide, on the French-Spanish border in 1940, and follows him into the underworld, receives its American première at the festival, performed by the Nieuw Ensemble Amsterdam and the Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart. (Rose Theatre, Frederick P. Rose Hall, Broadway at 60th St. July 21-22 at 8.) ♦ Icebreaker, the cutting-edge British ensemble, offers music by Nancarrow, Adès, Andriessen, and Zappa. (Allen Room, Rose Hall. July 23 at 9.) ♦ The versatile group Alarm Will Sound pays tribute to the electronic-music master Aphex Twin by performing exhaustively detailed acoustic renderings of his synthesized creations, remixed live by the sound artist Richard Devine. (Allen Room, Rose Hall. July 24 at 9.) (212-721-6500.)

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

Gregory Vajda, the assistant conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony, leads the next concert in this venerable series' centennial season, an evening of works by Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Bartók (including the "Romanian Folk Dances"). (Naumburg Band Shell, Central Park, enter at 72nd St. July 26 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

OUT OF TOWN

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL

July 21 at 7:30: The Amernet String Quartet, this season's resident ensemble, offers the world première of Joel Hoffman's Third Quartet (part of the festival's ongoing series of quartet commissions) along with quartets by Beethoven and Brahms (in B-Flat Major, Op. 67). ♦ July 22 at 8: Anton Kuerti, a renowned interpreter of the Germanic repertory, offers performances of sonatas by Beethoven and Schubert (in C Minor, D. 958) along with a selection of Brahms's "Piano Pieces," Op. 76. ♦ July 23 at 8: Will Crutchfield conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Verdi's **"La Traviata,"** featuring not only Georgia Jarman, Brian Downen, and Jason Howard in the leading roles but also much of the florid, bel-canto-style music that is usually cut from the score. ♦ July 24 at 4:30: The Emerson String Quartet and the pianist Wu Han fill the Venetian Theatre with music by Mendelssohn and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA

July 21 at 8: In **"Lucie de Lammermoor"**—the 1839 Paris version of "Lucia"—Donizetti compressed his original Italian work into a lighter, more compact form, a foil for the complex rhythms and colors of the new French text. Lillian Groag's production is a clunky feminist parable (something about women wearing antlers on their heads), but the singing makes it worthwhile, especially the piercing coloratura of Sarah Coburn, in the title role, and the Latin ardor and supple phrasing of Raúl Hernández as Edgard; Beatrice Jona Affron conducts. ♦ July 22 at 8 and July 26 at 2: The relaxed intimacy of the Alice

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Busch Opera Theatre allows **"Così Fan Tutte,"** the most annoyingly artificial of Mozart's great operas, new-found life. The clean lines of Tim Albery's production help, too: a nineteenth-century camera box with an expanding lens (literally) gives his characters room to explore the buried emotions in Da Ponte's absurd scenario. Anne-Sophie Duprels, Sandra Piques Eddy, John Tessier, and Palle Knudsen make a potent quartet of scheming young lovers, while Sanford Sylvan is an unusually wise and delectable Don Alfonso; Stewart Robertson, a careful and attentive Mozartean, presides in the pit. ♦ July 23 at 8 and July 25 at 2: Tazewell Thompson's new staging of **"Death in Venice,"** an opera that seems an ever more vital entry in the Britten canon. William Burden is Aschenbach, and David Pittsinger sings the multifaceted role of the Traveller; Robertson. ♦ July 24 at 2: A double bill of Massenet's **"Le Portrait de Manon"** (with Theodore Baerg, Bruce Reed, Colin Ainsworth, and Kristine Winkler, conducted by Andrew Bisantz) and Poulenc's **"La Voix Humaine"** (a star turn for the soprano Amy Burton, conducted by Robertson). (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255. Through Aug. 23.)

TANGLEWOOD
July 21 at 8:30: The Emerson String Quartet, on a Mendelssohn tear this season, brings a selection of works to Ozawa Hall (including the impassioned final Quartet in F Minor, Op. 80). ♦ July 22 at 8:30: James Levine, in the midst of his first Tanglewood season, conducts a weekend of Brahms symphonies with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a group whose institutional memory of these works runs deep; the first concert features the Symphonies Nos. 2-3. ♦ July 23 at 8:30: Levine returns to conduct the Brahms Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4. ♦ July 24 at 2:30: Pinchas Zukerman is the guest artist for a B.S.O. concert that includes two heroic works, Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony; Jens Georg Bachmann conducts. ♦ July 26 at 8:30: Levine conducts the first piece—Berlioz's crackling "Roman Carnival" Overture—in "Tanglewood on Parade," the institution's annual celebration of its glorious ensembles. Hans Graf and Bruce Hangen are also on hand to conduct music by Beethoven, Bernstein (the Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"), and Tchaikovsky (the "1812 Overture," with fireworks), performed by the B.S.O. along with the Boston Pops Orchestra and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
July 23 at 6: "The Spanish Style," an evening with the guitarist Jason Vieaux that features music by Tarrega ("Capricho Arabe"), Albéniz, Bach, and Robert Starer. ♦ July 24 at 3: The young Pacifica Quartet, fearlessly expert advocates of music new and old, offer a high-energy afternoon of works by Mendelssohn, Carter (the Fifth Quartet), and Beethoven (the Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 131). (Woodstock, N.Y. For more information, call 845-679-8217.)

BANG ON A CAN SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL
Known to one and all as "Banglewood," the festival features not only performances by the Bang on a Can All-Stars but extensive training for young composers and musicians eager to join the group's globe-trotting, rock-influenced, post-minimalist aesthetic. For their first concert of the summer, the All-Stars offer a virtuoso live performance of Brian Eno's ambient classic "Music for Airports." (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Mass. 413-662-2111. July 23 at 8.)

MARLBORO FESTIVAL
The pianists Mitsuko Uchida and Richard Goode direct this annual school and festival, devoted to deeply considered performances of the chamber-music repertory, which runs through Aug. 14; this year's resident composers are George Benjamin and William Bolcom. (Marlboro, Vt. July 23 at 8:30 and July 24 at 2:30. Programs are announced one week in advance at www.marlboromusic.org.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
The T'ang Quartet of Singapore performs music by Mozart, Dvořák, and Shostakovich (the Piano Quintet, with Pamela Mia Paul). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. July 24 at 3. For full schedule, see www.musicmountain.org.)

ANDY FRIEDMAN

MOVIES OPENING

BAD NEWS BEARS
Richard Linklater directed this remake of the 1976 movie, with Billy Bob Thornton as the coach of a losing Little League team. With Greg Kinnear and Marcia Gay Harden. Opening July 22. (In wide release.)

THE BALLAD OF GREENWICH VILLAGE
A documentary about the artists and bohemians who have shaped the ethos of the New York neighborhood. Narrated by Lili Taylor and directed by Karen Kramer. Opening July 22. (Quad Cinema.)

THE DEVIL'S REJECTS
Rob Zombie ("House of 1000 Corpses") directed this horror film, in which William Forsythe plays a revenge-obsessed sheriff chasing a murderous family. Opening July 22. (In wide release.)

THE EDUKATORS
Two German friends are disrupted in their attempt to make a political statement when one of their girlfriends moves in with them, in a drama directed by Hans Weingartner. In German. Opening July 22. (IFC Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HUSTLE & FLOW
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening July 22. (In wide release.)

THE ISLAND
A futuristic cloning thriller directed by Michael Bay, in which Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson escape from an ostensibly utopian community. Opening July 22. (In wide release.)

LAST DAYS
Gus Van Sant directed this drama, about a Seattle rock-and-roll star (Michael Pitt), inspired by Kurt Cobain, who is trying to cope with fame. Opening July 22. (Empire 25 and Sunshine Cinema.)

MAKING GRACE
A lesbian couple tries to have a baby, in a drama directed by Catherine Gund. Opening July 20. (Pioneer Theatre.)

MONUMENTAL: DAVID BROWER'S FIGHT FOR WILD AMERICA
A documentary about David Brower, an environmentalist who transformed the Sierra Club into an influential force. Directed by Kelly Duane. Opening July 22. (Quad Cinema.)

9 SONGS
Michael Winterbottom directed this drama, which combines music videos with scenes of a couple having sex. Opening July 22. (Angelika Film Center.)

NOVEMBER
An L.A. photographer (Courtney Cox) is haunted by her boyfriend's murder, in a thriller directed by Greg Harrison. Opening July 22. (In wide release.)

RITTENHOUSE SQUARE
Robert Downey directed this documentary, about the Philadelphia park. Opening July 22. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

NOW PLAYING

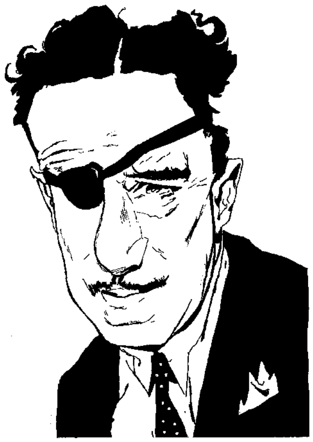
BATMAN BEGINS
And ends with a whimper. Christopher Nolan, working with a screenplay that he wrote with David S. Goyer, has attempted a literal-minded myth of creation. The orphaned young Bruce Wayne (a gloomy Christian Bale) undergoes an initiation in some nameless Asian snow-capped mountains, where he's trained by a morally ambiguous adjunct (Liam Neeson) to a shadowy ninja vigilante leader (Ken Watanabe). The screenplay sounds as if it were written after a course in self-realization taken on Santa Monica Boulevard, and the direction is both pompous and cheesy, with ridiculous plot developments and lots of whirling movement shot so close that we can't really see anything. Gotham is no longer a malignant paradise of evil; it's just dark. With Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine wasted in poorly written roles as Batman's allies.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/13 & 20/05.) (In wide release.)

THE BEAT THAT MY HEART SKIPPED
The jumpy young hero of Jacques Audiard's new film, Thomas Seyr (Romain Duris), works at sordid

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
LIFE OF WALSH

The dark suit and wide tie, the hat worn as tightly as a glove, the self-sufficient and decisive temperament operating in service of a private code of honor—that was the Humphrey Bogart character that became one of the most admired images in American movies, and it can be seen, in its first great flowering, in Raoul Walsh's fatalistic crime movie "High Sierra" (1941), which is being shown July 30-31 at 2 P.M. at the Museum of the Moving Image as part of an ongoing retrospective of Walsh's work. Starting in the silent era, Walsh made more than a hundred movies, many of them devoted to iconic portraits of men of action. "They Died with Their Boots On" (showing on July 30 at 4 P.M.) has Errol Flynn, in flowing locks, as the beautiful, stupid George Armstrong Custer, and the great "White Heat" (August 20-21 at 4:15 P.M.) stars Jimmy Cagney as a mother-fixated gangster who has a memorable fit in the big house when he hears that Ma has died. The Walsh series continues through August 21.

—*David Denby*



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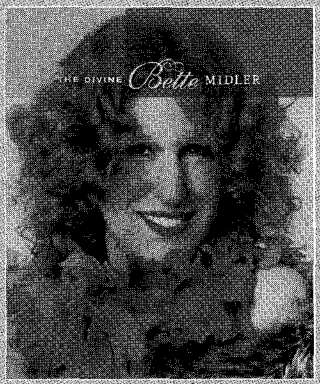

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real-estate schemes while dreaming of a career as a concert pianist. As Tom tears around Paris, rushing in and out of buildings and clubs, Audiard and his cinematographer, Stéphane Fontaine, crowd in behind him. In his black leather jacket, Duris is an anxious little hot shot with a twitchy, feral snarl that comes close to the reflexive grimace of the dangerous young Jean-Louis Trintignant. As Tom begins to move away from crime, the picture doesn't collapse into a stuffy display of virtue—the classical music that might save the hero is just as dangerous for him as his life of intimidation and fraud. With Niels Arestrup as Tom's baleful old reprobate father and Linh-Dan Pham as the Vietnamese pianist who takes him on as a student. This remake is more realistic and convincing than the movie it was based on, the notorious James Toback picture from 1978, "Fingers," in which Harvey Keitel starred as a Mafia enforcer who loved to play Bach. In French.—*D.D.* (7/4/05) (In wide release.)

BEWITCHED

We are ever more besieged by attempts to turn ancient TV shows into modern movies, many of them disastrously dull. This one, directed by Nora Ephron and co-written with her sister Delia, courageously tries a different tack, and what we end up with is a disaster of another order entirely. Nicole Kidman plays not Samantha (as incarnated for all eternity by Elizabeth Montgomery) but a witch named Isabel, who, having landed in Los Angeles, just happens to win the role of Samantha in a new version of the original series. After a sprightly first ten minutes, the magic simply evaporates from the surface of the film, and one actor after another comes to grief: Will Ferrell overheats as a fading star called Jack, who fancies himself as a Darren *de nos jours*, while Shirley MacLaine is handed the part of Endora and pretty much abandoned to her fate. The only person who cheers you up is Michael Caine, who remains knowingly calm as the chaos descends. A disenchanting spectacle all around.—*Anthony Lane* (6/27/05) (In wide release.)

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

FANTASTIC FOUR

If you prefer your cataclysms free of terrorist overtones and your superheroes unburdened by Freudian subtext—sometimes a comic book is just a comic book, after all—you could do worse than this flick. Four scientists and their corporate sponsor (guess who's the bad guy) are conducting experiments on a space station when they're hit by an unexpectedly powerful blast of solar radiation, altering their DNA and giving them freakish powers that cleverly reflect their personalities. Playing the characters created by the Marvel Comics master Stan Lee, the actors Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans, and Michael Chiklis inhabit their dual identities gracefully; they're superheroes without being superstars. It may not have the emotional sweep of "Superman" or "Spider-Man," but "Fantastic Four" glides along free of the dark, pretentious weight of some recent superhero films. The director, Tim Story ("Barbershop"), tells his tale with clarity and wit. It's a simple popcorn movie—not fantastic, but fun.—*Ken Marks* (In wide release.)

GEORGE A. ROMERO'S LAND OF THE DEAD

The godfather of zombie movies does his fourth dance with the dead in this take-no-prisoners horror opus. The setting is pure urban jungle—the poor live on the streets, the rich live in gleaming high-rises, and an electrified fence surrounding the city keeps the zombies at bay. It all goes to hell, of course, as it has many times before, but Romero's wit and gross outrageousness are still unequalled. There's a surprisingly strong class-warfare subtext at work here that's sweepingly entertaining, and Romero wisely guides his actors (Dennis Hopper and Asia Argento among them) through the bloody muck and mire with revolutionary enthusiasm.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

GOING HOLLYWOOD

Hearing Bill Williams (Bing Crosby) croon on the radio, a lonely boarding-school teacher named Sylvia Bruce (Marion Davies) falls madly in love with his voice and throws her life over to follow him to Hollywood. He turns out to be a lush and a cad, but how could she have known? This is, in effect, a stalker musical comedy, and if the comedy is unfunny and the music only fair, the heartfelt wildness

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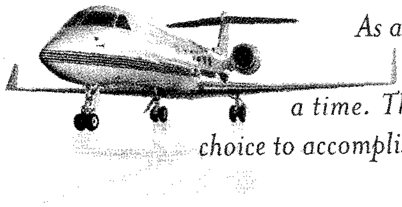

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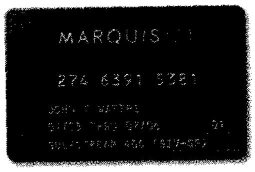
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of Sylvia's inner life is unforgettably strong. The director, Raoul Walsh, filmed Davies as if the earth moved with every rhapsodic swoon of her big, lively eyes, and his ecstatic closeups, superimpositions, and other optical effects make this 1933 studio cheesecake seem at times like an avant-garde silent. He seems awestruck by the miraculous power of radio to arouse the deepest emotions: Sylvia's rapt gaze as she first hears Bill on the air is nothing less than an erotic epiphany, and, as she falls asleep to his singing "We'll make hay while the sun shines, we'll make love when it rains," it's clear from her bliss upon rising that she has dreamt of rain.—*Richard Brody* (Walter Reade Theatre; July 20 and July 22.)

HAPPY ENDINGS

A complicated and excessively self-conscious mess that doesn't, in the end, add up to a lot but that has many affecting and funny moments along the way. Lisa Kudrow, teaming up again with the writer-director Don Roos (they made the tart "Opposite of Sex" in 1998), plays Mamie, a sardonic Los Angeles woman who gave up her son at birth and is being blackmailed by a chaotic young filmmaker (Jesse Bradford) who claims to know the name and whereabouts of the boy, now a teen-ager. In parallel stories, two gay men duel with a lesbian couple over the paternity of a baby, and a drifting young club singer and sex parasite (Maggie Gyllenhaal) seduces both a young gay man (Jason Ritter) and his wealthy widower father (Tom Arnold). Roos is trying to devise a shorthand method of unifying a whirl of narrative events, but he hasn't done the basic work of construction that would pull the stories together. Much of the writing is lively, however, and the actors are good—especially Gyllenhaal, who, as a very bad girl, has an irresistible smile.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

HUSTLE & FLOW

As DJay, a low-rent South Memphis pimp, Terrence Howard speaks in a soft, smoky voice that trails off into nowhere. His talkative hustler has the obscure, ruminative wit of an old bluesman; he turns his come-ons and rants into a sullen art. The movie asks whether that particular art is convertible yet again—whether DJay's hustle can be converted into the thumping flow of the Memphis-style rap known as crunk. Written and directed by Craig Brewer, this movie unfolds in the kind of awful heat that wilts any effort aimed at more than mere survival. Against all odds, DJay and his friends create a song. With Ludacris as a Memphis rapper returning to his home town after having made his fortune in the music business; Taryn Manning, Taraji P. Henson, and Paula Jai Parker as DJay's women; Anthony Anderson as a sound engineer; and D. J. Qualls as a skinny white guy who makes his living servicing concession machines but knows how to lay down crunk's bass-heavy tracks.—*D.D.* (7/11 & 18/05) (In wide release.)

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS

The French wildlife filmmaker Luc Jacquet spent more than a year chronicling the course of an emperor-penguin colony in Antarctica, and what he discovered was a touching, self-sacrificing ritual of parenthood. Trekking for miles through stunning ice-castle landscapes, Jacquet frames the penguins' mating cycle—from courtship through the birth and raising of their newborns—as a severe and forbidding ballet that demonstrates the true meaning of survival and determination. Narrated by Morgan Freeman.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW

Miranda July, who functions not just as the writer and director of her début but also as the star, plays an artist named Christine—hazy, shy, benign, and very possibly deranged. She falls for a shoe salesman (John Hawkes), who is recently separated and supposed to be caring for his two young sons. The elder boy (Miles Thompson) is seduced, and half humiliated, by a pair of underage girls; the younger (Brandon Ratcliff) logs onto pornographic chat rooms on the Internet. There is much distance and disaffection on parade, and, for all the skill of the child actors, no amount of tidy payoffs can dispel the air of unpleasantness. In other areas, the movie is more relaxed, and some of the scruffy, shining cityscapes are a sorrowful joy to behold; whether you admire the outcome depends on whether you like the kind of picture in which the most spiritually urgent tribute is paid to a dead fish.—*A.L.* (6/27/05) (In wide release.)

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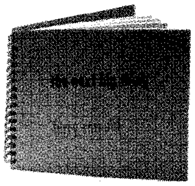

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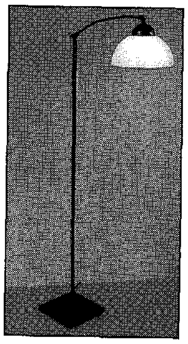

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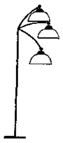

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MR. AND MRS. SMITH
Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, a married couple who work as professional killers, are unhappy in bed, so they warm each other up by firing machine guns, Glocks, and God knows what else at each other at point-blank range and then kicking each other in the groin. When you see it, you understand why the rest of the world thinks Americans are crazy. Doug Liman, the young director who began his career making nifty independent movies like "Swingers" and "Go," now apparently believes that if violence is insouciant and zippy and meaningless it will be taken as the latest in sophisticated fun. Jolie, turning her head sideways and dropping her eyelids, looks great, but what she does in this movie is more like voguing than acting, and Pitt's voice is so toneless and inexpressive that it's frequently inaudible. Written by Simon Kinberg.—*D.D. (6/13 & 20/05)* (In wide release.)

MURDERBALL
The cutthroat sport of quadriplegic rugby, or "kill the man with the ball," is the focus of this energetic and riveting documentary by Dana Adam Shapiro and Henry Alex Rubin. The directors followed the young, tattooed jock Mark Zupan, the seasoned coach Joe Soares, and several other players on the U.S. and Canadian teams as they trained for the 2004 Paralympics, in Athens. With graceful editing and a minimal score, Shapiro and Rubin interweave the players' stories—their families, sex lives, physical achievements—with well-shot scenes of the action. The athletes play with fury, transferring their anger at their disabilities into incredible agility and power. The men seem at a loss when they attempt to fathom their situations, but their pure will allows them to keep moving.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

MY MAN GODFREY
In this entertaining (and hugely successful) screwball comedy about the Depression, from 1936, Carole Lombard is a rich, gorgeous nit who goes to the city dump to find a "forgotten man." The man she finds—a suave, bitter victim of the economic collapse—is played by William Powell. When she tells him she needs to take him back to a party in order to win a scavenger hunt, he asks what that is, and, sighing, she says, "A scavenger hunt is just like a treasure hunt, except in a treasure hunt you find something you want and in a scavenger hunt you find things you don't want and the one who wins gets a prize, only there really isn't any prize, it's just the honor of winning, because all the money goes to charity if there's any money left over, but then there never is." Lombard has a delirious, breathless plaintiveness at a moment like this—recognition dawning in her. The movie starts out with a promising satiric idea and winds up in box-office romance, but it's likable and well paced even at its silliest. Lombard shrieks happily and Powell modulates impeccably. Directed by Gregory La Cava.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; July 23.)

RIZE
In the fashion photographer David LaChapelle's exhilarating take on competing groups of urban dancers in South Central L.A., the highly charged rival styles of the clowners and the krumpers are breathtaking to watch; both styles are a whirling dervish of limbs, although krumping is a more stripped-down, confrontational version. LaChapelle's ornate filmmaking captures the dances in all their violent beauty, and the film is also a richly complex exploration of the lives of these inner-city teens; it's a hip-hop poem to their self-expression and resiliency.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

WAR OF THE WORLDS
When Steven Spielberg does digital special effects, they have an appalling weight—the heft and fling of huge masses hurled through space. At one point, Tom Cruise, playing an irresponsible dad with two children he must learn to protect, hurtles along the street right toward the camera, which is rapidly receding before him, and buildings and people on all sides disintegrate as the street itself puckers and bubbles like a fondue at the boil. In Spielberg's stark, horror-movie take on H. G. Wells's classic novel from 1898, there are no brilliant scientists from Caltech and no government authorities to cope with the alien invaders, as there were in older sci-fi-disaster movies. We are entirely alone. For an hour or so, as a physical realization of disaster, the picture is amazing, but then it runs out of gas, and we have time to wonder at a spectacle in which the aliens land and everyone dies so that Tom Cruise can grow up one more time. With Tim Robbins as a defiant, militia-minded basement dweller. The screenplay is by David Koepp and Josh Friedman.—*D.D.* (7/11 & 18/05) (In wide release.)

WEDDING CRASHERS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

THE WORLD
The young Chinese director Jia Zhangke, in his fourth film—and the first not to be banned in China—turns Beijing's real-life World Park, with its tacky reproductions of the world's cultural wonders, into a derisive microcosm of China today. As Tao (Zhao Tao), an actress in the site's bland pageantry, and her boyfriend, Taisheng (Chen Taisheng), a security guard, ponder whether to marry, it seems not to matter: like their friends and colleagues, they struggle vainly for money, for love, and, mostly, for escape. Cell phones and walkie-talkies convey an oppressive mood of surveillance, and the prospect of immigration provides the only moment of true happiness. Jia's tenderness for his characters is infused with a quiet rage: as the distant wide-screen views freeze them in a confining emptiness, dead zones of action and dialogue suggest a land where imagination itself has been suppressed. In Mandarin.—*R.B.* (Cinema Village.)

Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson in Michael Bay's "The Island."

JOHN RITTER

Also Playing

THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY: Empire 25 and Quad Cinema. **MAD HOT BALLROOM:** In wide release. **MY SUMMER OF LOVE:** In wide release. **SARABAND:** Film Forum and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. **STAR WARS—EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH:** In wide release (*5/23/04*).

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—New York premières. July 20-21 at 7 and 9: "The Oil Factor: Behind the War on Terror" (2004, Gerard Ungerman and Audrey Brohy). ♦ July 22-26 at 7 and 9 and July 23-24 at 3 and 5: "Throwdown" (2004, Johnny To; in Cantonese). ♦ "Storefront Films." July 26 at 7:30: "Do the Right Thing" (1989, Spike Lee).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Cinema Tropical." July 20 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Middle of the World" (2003, Vicente Amorim; in Portuguese). ♦ "Attack of the Trailers!" July 21 at 7: A program of movie trailers. ♦ Through July 31: "In Deppth," a Johnny Depp retrospective. July 22 at 3, 6, and 9: "The Ninth Gate" (1999, Roman Polanski). ♦ July 23 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" (1998, Terry Gilliam). ♦ July 24 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Sleepy Hollow" (1999, Tim Burton). ♦ Through July 28: "After Vigo." July 25 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Another Girl Another Planet" (1992, Michael Almereyda). ♦ July 26 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "The Lovers on the Bridge" (1991, Leos Carax; in French).

BARD SUMMERSCAPE
The Milton and Sally Avery Center for the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. (845-758-7900)—Through Aug. 14: "William Wyler's America." July 21 at 7: "Jezebel" (1938). ♦ July 24 at 7: "The Little Foxes" (1941).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—"Paramount Before the Code." July 20 at 1:45, 5:20, and 8:55: "Morocco" (1930, Josef von Sternberg). ♦ July 20 at 3:35 and 7:10: "A Farewell to Arms" (1932, Frank Borzage). ♦ July 21 at 2, 4:50, and 7:40: "She Done Him Wrong" (1933, Lowell Sherman). ♦ July 21 at 3:25, 6:15, and 9:05: "Night After Night" (1932, Archie Mayo). ♦ Through July 28: Fiftieth-anniversary screening. July 22-26 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Occupation of France Series." July 26 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Forbidden Games" (1952, René Clément; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"The Criterion Collection on Screen." July 21 at 8:45: "Slacker" (1991, Richard Linklater). ♦ "Weekend Classics." July 23-24 at noon: "Late Spring" (1949, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." July 23: "King of New York" (1990, Abel Ferrara).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Gus Van Sant's "Trilogy." July 20 at 5: "Gerry" (2002). ♦ July 20 at 7: "Elephant" (2003). ♦ July 20 at 9: "Last Days" (2005). ♦ "Anime!!" July 20 at 6: "Akira" (1988, Katsuhiro Ôtomo; in Japanese). ♦ July 21 at 8: "Space Pirate Captain Harlock: Arcadia of My Youth" (1982, Tomoharu Katsumata; in Japanese). ♦ "Miramax: 25 Years." July 20 at 8:45: "In the Bedroom" (2001, Todd Field). ♦ July 21 at 5:30: "The Cider House Rules" (1999, Lasse Hallström). ♦ Through Aug. 15: The films of Gregory La Cava. July 22 at 6: "Bed of Roses" (1933). ♦ July 22 at 8: "Stage Door" (1937). ♦ July 23 at 2: "So's Your Old Man" (1926; silent). ♦ July 23 at 4: "Running Wild" (1927; silent). ♦ July 23 at 6: "Gabriel Over the White House" (1933). ♦ July 23 at 8: "My Man Godfrey" (†). ♦ July 24 at 1: Cartoons by Gregory La Cava (1915-16). ♦ July 24 at 3 and July 25 at 8: "Laugh and Get Rich" (1931). ♦ July 24 at 5: "The Half-Naked Truth" (1932). ♦ July 25 at 6: Political cartoons by Gregory La Cava (1917-19).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Outdoor Cinema, at Socrates Sculpture Park, on Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City. July 20 at 7: "Spare Parts" (2003, Damjan Kozole; in Slovenian). ♦ "Black Light: Films from the African Diaspora." July 22 at 7:30: "Stander" (2003, Bronwen Hughes; in English and Afrikaans). ♦ Through Aug. 21: A Raoul Walsh retrospective. July 23-24 at 2: "The Roaring Twenties" (1939). ♦ July 23 at 4:30: "They Drive by Night" (1940). ♦ July 24 at

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4:30: "The Strawberry Blonde" (1941). ♦ Repertory nights. July 23-24 at 6:30: "Blow-Up" (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. July 22-23: "Edward Scissorhands" (1990, Tim Burton).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"What a Swell Party This Is!: A Salute to Bing Crosby." July 20 at 2 and July 22 at 6:20: "Going Hollywood" (†). ♦ July 20 at 4 and 8:45: "The Country Girl" (1954, George Seaton). ♦ July 20 at 6:30: "High Society" (1956, Charles Walters). ♦ July 21 at 2:30 and 6:15: "Sing You Sinners" (1938, Wesley Ruggles). ♦ July 21 at 4:30 and 8:15: "Pennies from Heaven" (1936, Norman McLeod). ♦ July 22 at 2 and July 23 at 6:20: "Blue Skies" (1946, Stuart Heisler). ♦ July 22 at 4:10 and 8:30: "Anything Goes" (1936, Lewis Milestone). ♦ July 23 at 1:30 and July 25 at 8:35: "Robin and the 7 Hoods" (1964, Gordon Douglas). ♦ July 23 at 8:45 and July 26 at 4: "High Time" (1960, Blake Edwards). ♦ July 24 at 2: "Road to Zanzibar" (1941, Victor Schertzinger). ♦ July 24-25 at 4: "Going My Way" (1944, Leo McCarey). ♦ July 24 at 6:45: "High Tor" (1956, James Nielsen). ♦ July 24 at 8:30 and July 25 at 2: "Rhythm on the River" (1940, Schertzinger). ♦ July 25 at 6:30 and July 26 at 2: "The Emperor Waltz" (1948, Billy Wilder).

READINGS AND TALKS

"LEAVES OF GRASS"
On Wednesdays this month, the Poetry Society of America and the Brooklyn Historical Society celebrate the sesquicentennial of Whitman's masterpiece with a marathon reading by local poets of the 1855 edition in its entirety. On July 20 at 6:30, Joshua Beckman, Kimiko Hahn, Bob Holman, Jaime Manrique, and Vijay Seshadri do the honors. (128 Pierrepont St. 718-222-4111.)

"PARK LIT"
The roving reading series moves to Astoria Park, in Queens, where Sam Lipsyte, Hal Sirowitz, and Jeffrey Renard Allen, all of whom live in the borough, will read from their work. (Between 23rd Ave. and Ditmars Blvd. For more information, call 212-696-6609 or visit www.opencity.org/parklit. July 20 at 6:30.)

DIANA STUART
The photographer chronicled a ubiquitous and overlooked bit of the cityscape in her 2003 book, "Designs Underfoot: The Art of Manhole Covers in New York City." On July 21 at noon, she discusses their history and the foundries that produced them. (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 212-413-8841.)

STACY HORN
The author of "The Restless Sleep: Inside New York City's Cold Case Squad," talks about the efforts to close the thousands of murder cases that remain unsolved in the city. She'll be joined by Vito Spano, a former N.Y.P.D. Cold Case Squad commanding officer. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. 212-534-1672. July 23 at 2.)

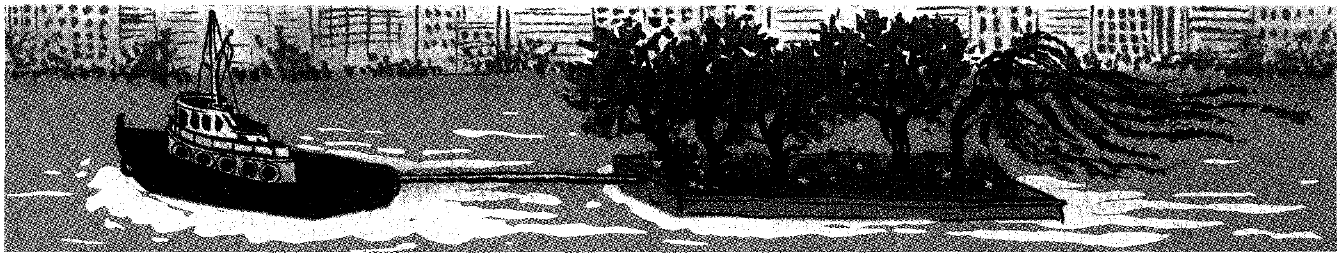
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Joseba Zulaika, the director of the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, discusses the work of the Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza, which is on display at the museum. (Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. July 26 at 6:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

UPRIGHT CITIZENS BRIGADE
The maverick comedy ensemble, originally from Chicago and now based in Chelsea, specializes in a confrontational brand of improvisational humor. They head to Central Park for the night to help SummerStage celebrate its twentieth anniversary. The founding members, Matt Besser, Amy Poehler, Ian Roberts, and Matt Walsh, along with special guests, are scheduled to appear. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777. July 21 at 7:30.)

DEL CLOSE IMPROV MARATHON
The seventh annual gathering of quick-thinking comics, which is organized by the Upright Citizens Brigade (see above), pays tribute to the late Chicago master with round-the-clock performances by improv groups from across the country. (Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. For more information, visit www.delclosemarathon.com. July 22-24.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
Two key components stripped from Charles Lindbergh's 1930 Lockheed Sirius monoplane top Christie's sale of maritime art work, aviation equipment, and scientific instrumentation on July 20. A hundred-and-sixteen-inch variable-pitch, polished-aluminum propeller was used on a flight from New York to Nanking in 1931; the trip, which Lindbergh made with his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, inspired her book "North to the Orient." The other item—a Bausch & Lomb bubble sextant—was used during the couple's record-breaking transcontinental flight from California to Long Island. The sale also includes a variety of model ships, posters, globes, and telescopes. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)



YUKO SHIMIZU

ON THE HORIZON

NIGHT LIFE
LATIN ROCK
Aug. 3-6

The Latin Alternative Music Conference returns to New York City for the first time in three years, with a wide variety of acts playing shows uptown (Los Amigos Invisibles at the Museo del Barrio), downtown (Natalia y la Forquetina and others at the Bowery Ballroom), midtown (Aterciopelados, Coheed & Cambria, and Bebe at Central Park's SummerStage), and in Brooklyn (Plastilina Mosh at Prospect Park). (www.latinalternative.com.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
ALL AARON
Aug. 12-14 and Aug. 19-21

This summer's Bard Music Festival, in upstate New York, is devoted entirely to "Copland and His World," which gives the dean of American composers the full Leon Botstein treatment, with the American Symphony Orchestra playing most of his major works. (845-758-7900.)

MOVIES
SAMURAI HEAVEN
Aug. 19-Sept. 15

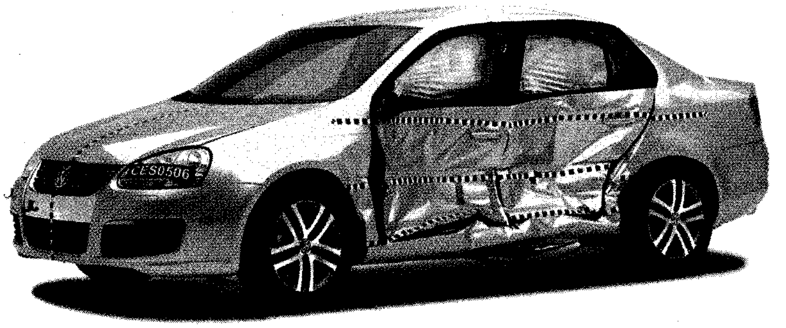
Film Forum will kick off its Summer Samurai Festival with Masaki Kobayashi's "Samurai Rebellion," from 1967. The films include Akira Kurosawa's classic "Seven Samurai," from 1954, and his "Macbeth" adaptation, "Throne of Blood," from 1957. (212-727-8110.)

THE THEATRE
BROADWAY BROOKE
Sept. 9

The durable musical "Chicago" gets a boost this September when Brooke Shields begins a limited run as the pistol-packing, publicity-seeking showgirl Roxie Hart—a role she's now playing in the show's London production. (212-239-6200.)

ART
HOPE FLOATS
Sept. 17-18 and Sept. 24-25

In 1970, the sculptor and earthworks pioneer Robert Smithson outlined his plan for "Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan." Three years later, though, Smithson died in a plane crash, leaving the floating-island project unfinished. Now, in honor of the artist's retrospective at the Whitney, the thirty-five-year-old plan is coming to life again—soil and flora are being assembled on a barge that will travel the Hudson, Harlem, and East Rivers for two weekends in September. (212-570-3676.)



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THE NEW YORKER

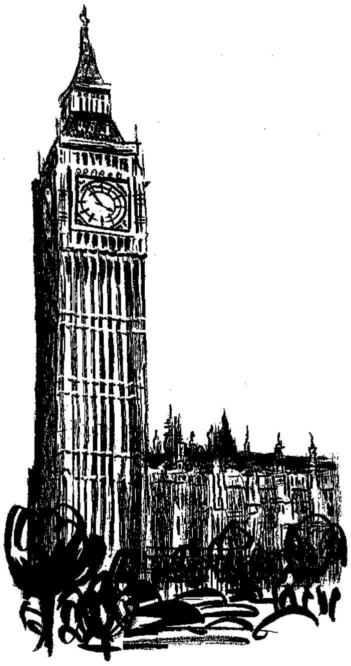
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
NOT SCARED

In the hours after the Thursday-morning bombings in London, it seemed as if everyone was on the streets, walking home. With the Tube shut down and buses barred from the central part of the city, hundreds of thousands of people went trudging in the bright sunlight—across Westminster Bridge and in front of Westminster Abbey and down Birdcage Walk, next to St. James's Park, which, in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, was lined with ancient ambulances from the Blitz.

To anyone who had been on the streets of New York on September 11th, the resemblance was both sickeningly familiar and startlingly different. The sense of a city turned inside out, of a shock too large to quite analyze—that was there. But the consuming terror was not. No one ran, or cried, or even talked much about what had happened. Businessmen walked side by side from the City to the South Bank, still doing business, jiggling their cell phones impatiently in a futile attempt to make them work. Visitors just off trains marched toward their West End hotels, bags in hand or thrown over the shoulder. The police had an emergency plan—blocking off some streets, and redirecting human traffic to others—that seemed marked by a preternatural calm and a long-considered certainty. So calm and certain, in fact, that when, near Victoria Station, on Buckingham Palace Road, American tourists clustered around police officers and demanded directions, the bobbies took maps from the blue-rinsed legions and kindly, patiently, even chattily, showed them how to get from where they were to where they wanted to go.

Much of the difference, of course, was a matter of scale. Big Ben had not collapsed; the dead were going to number in the dozens, not the thousands. By some hideous new standard, as the security services allowed, London had "got off easy." And there was no image to run again and again on television; Hell was mainly hidden underground. In New York then, we had to make an effort to get to "normalcy," and in London now people almost had to make an effort not to be normal, not to allow the swiftly resumed flow of life to remove them from the reality of a tube far below the street, with hundreds of mangled and murdered people inside. (A woman, we were told, was found on one of the trains by a policeman who saw that, though she was moaning, she had neither legs nor arms.)



In the absence of fear, what asserted itself was, simply, tradition—a habit of responding shaped not only by memories of the Blitz but, more acutely, by the I.R.A. bombings of the past three decades, which were random and deadly. (In England, the I.R.A. was responsible for the mutilation of scores of people and the deaths of almost a hundred, including two senior Conservative politicians and Lord Mountbatten; in 1984, it very nearly got Margaret Thatcher herself, at a Tory Party conference at Brighton.) And without the corrosive presence of fear the argument about what had happened in London became, very quickly, starker, blunter, and more faceted than the argument has been allowed to be in America. The patriotically correct nationalism of the Murdoch media is less paralyzing in Britain than it is here. The London argument pits not left against right but the old right and the old left against the Thatcherite right and the Blairite left. And, while in America the argument that a war on terror might not be "winnable," or that the terrorists might not be madmen but shrewd and calculating militants with a clear cause,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

has often seemed almost unsayable, everyone in London was either offering it or offering a refutation of it.

One early casualty, for instance, was "The Power of Nightmares," an influential three-part BBC series that argued that Al Qaeda does not exist, except as a kind of collective hallucination on the part of American neoconservatives. This hypothesis, and, with it, the theory that the terrorist threat was manufactured or hyped, had become extremely powerful on the respectable left. To be fair, the show's producers never argued that there were *no* Islamist terrorists—their argument was, instead, that there was no coördinated network of terrorists run by an old Man of the Mountain in hiding. But the popular, anti-Blair, dinner-table view had long ago become that the terrorist threat was exaggerated, or that it wasn't immediate. That view was destroyed in a morning.

Yet the antiwar left (and right) did not hesitate to blame Blair and Bush for what had happened in London. The bizarre left-wing M.P. George Galloway was the first off the mark, insisting within hours that the bombings were the inevitable payback for the war in Iraq. He was so clearly lacking in tact and a sense of fitness that no one took him seriously. But serious people quickly made the same argument; as early as Friday morning, journalists like Tariq Ali, in the *Guardian*, were saying flatly that what had happened had happened because Britain was in Iraq. The United States and Britain began the war in Iraq with the certainty, the argument goes, that they would cause many civilian casualties in pursuit of their political goal, and that the response, however brutal and inhumane, is part of the normal calculations of organized violence.

Against this argument is the view that the new kind of terrorism is essentially nihilist and apocalyptic, and that Iraq is only a kind of inchoate excuse. "After all, the African embassy bombings happened before Iraq," Mark Urban, the diplomatic editor of the BBC program "Newsnight," said. "The I.R.A. had a political arm, and a political goal, however unreal: they killed to get people to the table. What is there to negotiate with these people? An end to the American presence in Saudi Arabia? All right, we'll consider it. The elimination of the State of Israel? Hmm, that may be a bit more difficult. The restoration of a universal Islamic caliphate? It may be a bit of a deal-breaker, that. This is not a program, really. It's a wraparound justification for a violence whose real end is the expiation of shame through massacre."

Of course, the worst of both readings of what is happening is surely true. The terrorists are psychopathic *and* shrewd, nihilist *and* rational, glorying in death for death's sake while still calculating whom to kill, with what effect, when. Will this epoch, which began on 9/11 and had a new chapter written on 7/7, end only with the apocalyptic defeat of one side or another, or will it end, as all previous terrorisms have, with unspoken concession and quiet remedy and pointed police action and the workings of time and politics? This isn't an argument that can be ended or resolved, in London or anywhere else, anytime soon. But at least it *is* an argument, and at least in London they weren't afraid to have it.

—*Adam Gopnik*

MIRROR, MIRROR

FACE-OFF

The recent flap over a doctored photograph released by the mayoral campaign of Virginia Fields, in which two Asian faces were superimposed on white ones, offers another little chunk of evidence for the case that, in politics, image is everything. At issue, ultimately, is whether it would have been more ethical for Fields, the Manhattan borough president, to have staged a live photo-op with multi-ethnic supporters at her side, instead of simply Photoshopping them in.

Yet maybe worrying about who is pictured *with* the candidate is missing the point, imagewise. According to a new study published in *Science*, first impressions of candidates' own faces may well be the determining factor in most elections. Specifically, what voters seem to be looking for—and discerning, in as little as a second—is an indication of competence, as distinct from attractiveness or trustworthiness or intelligence. The study was designed by a Princeton psychology professor named Alexander Todorov, who analyzed several hundred recent congressional races. He found that simply by flashing a pair of head shots before subjects' eyes, and asking them to identify the face that displayed the most competence, he could predict winners with about seventy-per-cent accuracy.

But is competence revealed in the cheekbones, the jawline, the fullness of the lips? An article that accompanied Todorov's study, written by Joann M. Montepare and Leslie Zebrowitz, the author of "Reading Faces: Window to the Soul?," suggests an answer: voters perceive "baby-facedness" (broad cheeks, small chin, big eyes) as a sign of incompetence, whereas "facial maturity" (jutting chin, furrowed brow, angular nose) connotes capability. "When images of former U.S. presidents Reagan and Kennedy were morphed to increase baby-facedness," the article says, "their perceived dominance, strength, and cunning decreased significantly." Joe Lieberman's crags and Arnold Schwarzenegger's squared-off mug, in other words, bode well; the billowing chins of Al Sharpton and the cherubic cheeks of John Edwards do not. The implications are far-reaching. Did Silvio Berlusconi's face-lift, for instance, do him any good? And what should we make of the John Kerry Botox rumors?

Here in New York the mayoral election looms. Granted, there are probably more electoral-prediction models by now than candidates for public office, and it's a safe bet that Michael Bloomberg will be reëlected without consulting any of them. From a scientific perspective, however, the Democratic primary race presents a reasonable test case for the Todorov approach, which is best suited for candidates with a low recognition factor.

So Professor Todorov, who has a boyish, if not babyish, face, sat down the other day, in a Brooklyn café, and was presented with four photographs: Representative Anthony Weiner (lean, pronounced nose, square jaw), City Council Speaker Gifford Miller (pale, plump-cheeked), the former Bronx borough president Freddy Ferrer (glasses, mustache), and Fields (black, full-faced). He recognized only Ferrer, the current front-runner. "They're so young," he said, glancing at the others. (Weiner is forty, Miller is thirty-four, and Fields is fifty-nine.) Young, as in resembling a baby? Todorov expressed some reservations about the scientific rigor being employed. And he said that

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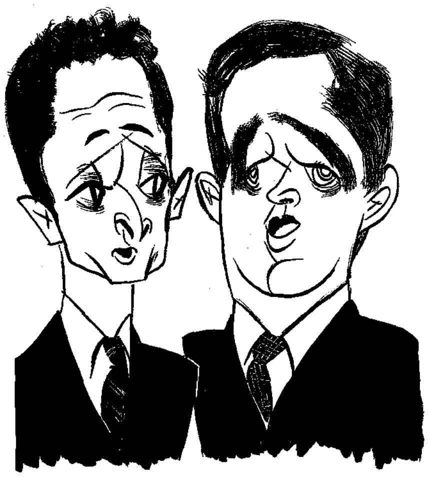
he didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

"Well, he is the most masculine," the professor said, pointing at the scowling photograph of Weiner. Then, looking at Miller and his softer features, he shrugged. "He looks competent to *me*." Whatever the case, neither candidate's physiognomy has helped much at the polls: Weiner and Miller have been jostling between third and fourth place for months.

Although Fields is polling second, she suffers, facially speaking, from a handicap: according to the Zebrowitz and Montepare article, "A woman's facial anatomy tends to be more neotenous"—meaning, in a sense, larval—"than a man's, which may be a drawback for women when vying for leadership positions."

Ferrer presents another interesting case, because, although he does have full, rosy cheeks, it is impossible to ignore that mustache—a sign of maturity or of insecurity? ("You can disguise your basic facial structure with facial hair," Zebrowitz said last week.) Some commentators have said that he resembles Groucho Marx, which may not augur well for his perceived competence.



Anthony Weiner and Gifford Miller

Late last week, one of the beheaded people from the doctored Fields-campaign photo spoke up on behalf of his own face, which, as it happens, falls unambiguously into the "baby-faced" category. The man, whose name is Johnny Rivera, initially wondered why Fields's people had replaced his head with another man's. "Am I not that attractive?" he asked. "I've been told on numerous occasions that I have a face you can trust. It always annoyed me, as a teen-ager growing up in New York City, in the housing projects, that I looked like a, quote unquote, good boy. I wanted to look mean and tough."

—*Ben McGrath*

DEPT. OF TRYOUTS

LOW NOTES

When, this spring, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra held auditions to fill an open seat in its bass section, Kurt Muroki, who lives on the Upper West Side, carried his bass ten blocks south to Lincoln Center. Of all the candidates—there were sixty-two—he had probably travelled the shortest distance. Susan Wulff may have travelled the farthest; she flew in from San Diego, arriving late the night before her tryout. "I got to my hotel, with my bass, at ten-thirty, and they're, like, 'Bad news. No room,' so they sent me to another hotel—the Edison?—and brown water came out of the shower."

Between 1985 and 2004, only two seats in the Met's bass section opened up. The second became available last summer, hence the auditions, which took place over four days. The Met is considered one of the best orchestra gigs in the country. ("This job would double my salary," one candidate said. "You get dental," another noted.) Each bassist would play for five minutes or so, for a panel of six judges, drawn from the ranks of the Met's orchestra.

Day One: In a basement rehearsal room, panels of plywood had been rigged up in a corner, creating a screen so that the judges could not see the players. A voice called out, "Player No. 14!" Papers shuffled. A chair (or music stand?) squeaked behind the plywood. Then, after a silence, the first notes of Humperdinck's "Hänsel und Gretel" overture floated over the partition. After five minutes, the judges whispered and made hand signals. Then one of them called out, "We'd like to hear the first excerpt again. We'd like to have the player try to make the dots a little *dryer*. Perhaps a little more space." Player No. 14 tried to make the dots dryer. Then a door opened and closed. "Player No. 15!" Shuffling. Squeaking. Silence. Humperdinck.

After a candidate played, he or she went to wait in a nearby locker room. Muroki came in, joining those who had played before him. "I hit the first A, but then I just crapped out," he said.

Another candidate, an Italian man, rolled his eyes; he'd seen Muroki play before. "Watch—he'll advance," he told the others. Muroki slumped in a chair. "If there is one orchestra in the entire world I'd want to play for, it is this one," he said. Nods all around, except for one guy, who said that playing in a rock band would be better. "Oh, yeah," Muroki said. " 'This is my seventeenth-century instrument. Let me light it on fire onstage for you.' "

Another player came in and looked around the room, which had filled up with nine bassists and their basses. "Which one of us do they shoot first?" he asked.

After nearly an hour, the orchestra manager, Bob Sirinek, appeared in the doorway and announced that three people from this batch had advanced to the semifinals. Muroki was one of them, and the Italian shrugged, as if to say, "See?"

Day Three: Wulff was standing in the hall, still unshowered. She was much shorter than her bass. She had played for the judges that morning and had qualified for the semifinals, which would take place the following day. "I would have stayed even if I hadn't advanced," she said. "I love this city. I'm just a California girl trying to move to New York. I almost won a job with New York City Ballet a few years ago, but"—she gestured toward an Asian man who was also auditioning—"that guy won it." She picked up her bass and her folding stool with a grunt. "I love the bass. It's cool. But I should have played the viola."

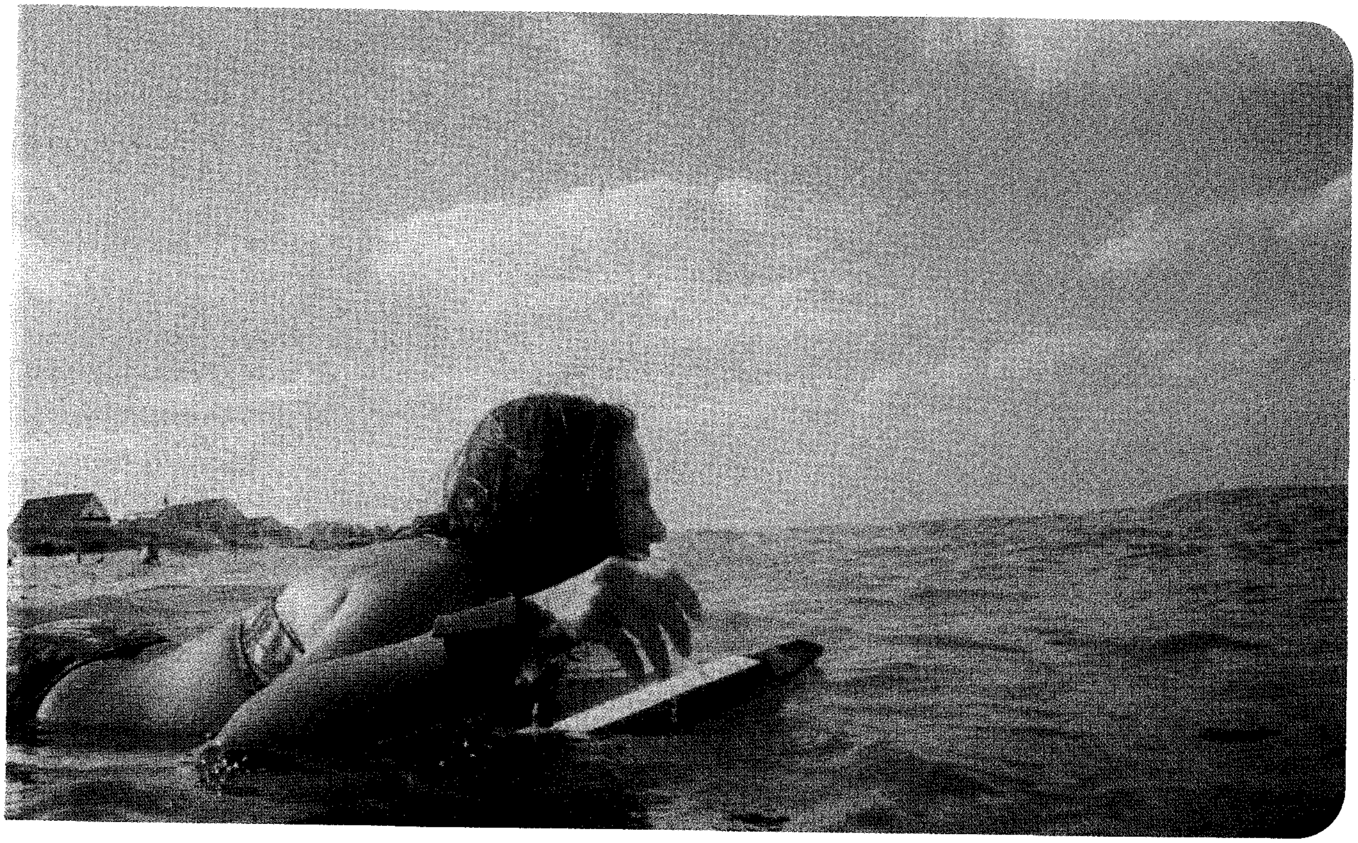
Day Four: Twelve candidates remained. In the locker room, a semifinalist from Baltimore leaned over to examine Wulff's bass. "What kind of G-string do you have?" he asked. "Only in a bass audition could you say that to a woman."

Out of boredom or nerves, Muroki started imitating a judge asking him to play a passage again. " 'Could you play it like the rear end of a cow?' " He sighed.

Sirinek finally arrived, and the room went quiet: Wulff and two others had made the finals. Wulff leaped up, accepted quiet congratulations, and hauled her bass down the hall to practice before playing for the judges one last time.

As Muroki waited for the elevator, a tall

Don't forget to thank that pair of stilettos for not wearing shoes all week.



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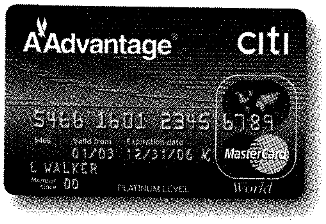

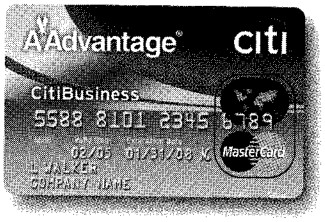

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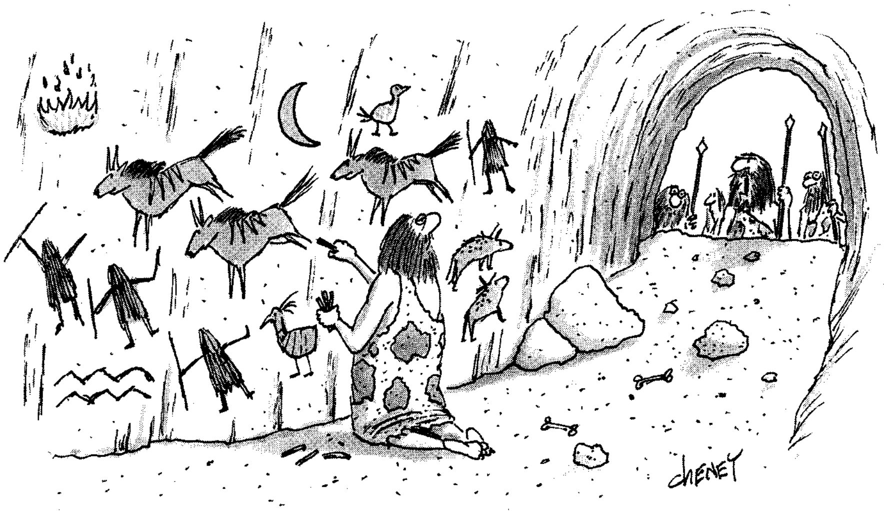


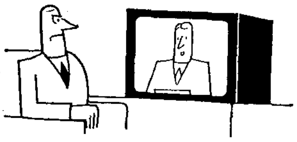
"So—are you ready to reveal your sources?"

• •

player, Daniel Krekeler, passed by on his way to warm up. (An hour later, he would be named the Met's new bassist.) "Good luck," Muroki said. Krekeler smiled and disappeared. "I'm done with auditions," Muroki said as he heaved his bass into the elevator, preparing to walk the ten blocks home. "I can't deal with the stress."

—*Ryan D'Agostino*

SPINOFF DEPT.
REPORTER GUY



As the evening news dies and newspapers struggle for their lives, who knew that so many would pay so dear a price for made-up news? One recent afternoon, even in the shady bits of sidewalk along West Fifty-fourth Street the temperatures and humidity were at rain-forest levels, and yet hordes of humans—scrums, mobs, as many as, say, two dozen—sat on the concrete for hours to get into the six-thirty taping of "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." Few were aware that, like the last fans at Ebbets Field, they would be a historical audience. Jon Stewart and his company of merry fools were moving. This was their last show at 513 West Fifty-fourth. Interns were packing crates. The next taping would take place at the studio on Eleventh Avenue where, until recently, Emeril Lagasse whisked his roux. "And look at me," said Stephen Colbert, who plays a "well-intentioned, poorly informed, high-status idiot" of a news correspondent on "The Daily Show." "Look at me. I'm not going anywhere."

Colbert's sense of abandonment was limited by the fact that he was staying behind on West Fifty-fourth Street to develop his own fake-news program, "The Colbert Report," which, starting in October, will air just after the fake news on "The Daily Show." "It'll be like O'Reilly segueing into Hannity, Hannity into Greta, Larry King into Aaron Brown," he said. "I love that Aaron Brown, the way he sucks the flavor out of every word, and I love the way he mulls. No one mulls the news like Aaron Brown." If "The Daily Show" is faux evening news, "The Colbert Report" will be faux Bill O'Reilly. "The focus will be me, lots of me," Colbert said. "Occasionally, we'll turn the camera elsewhere, but only for pacing." And what sort of presence will "Stephen Colbert" have? "My ambition is to have Stone Phillips's neck and Geraldo Rivera's sense of mission."

Since Bill Murray's departure for the movies, no one has done fatuous like Colbert does fatuous: the serious-reporter-guy ability to cock a brow with bogus knowing, his way of tilting his head to indicate sincerity worthy of an Airedale. The key is not listening, missing the point. During the 2004 Presidential campaign, "The Daily Show" interviewed the Democratic candidates, none more vividly than the Reverend Al Sharpton:

> Colbert: In street lingo, are you running to stick it to the Man?
>
> Sharpton: I don't know on what street you got that language.
>
> Colbert: The urban street. The mean streets.
>
> Sharpton: I'm sticking up for a lot of people that have felt that no one has stuck up for them. But I'm not trying to stick it to anyone.
>
> Colbert: Not even . . . the Man?
>
> Sharpton: Who's the Man?
>
> Colbert: Let's pretend for a moment that I'm the Man. Now stick it to me.
>
> Sharpton: I'm not sticking it to anyone.
>
> Colbert: Not even the Man? He's very stickable.

The real Stephen Colbert is a little like the one on television, but smart and leached of self-importance. In his ramshackle office, the most impressive decorations are an ancient Nixon campaign poster and a portrait of Ace, one of the two animated superheroes who make up the Ambiguously Gay Duo on "Saturday Night Live." "I am proud to say that he is me," he said. "I am the voice of Ace." Colbert is forty-one, a native of South Carolina, one of eleven children, the father of three, a suburban guy, and deaf in one ear. "I had this weird tumor as a kid, and they scooped it out with a melon baller."

When Colbert was a student in Chicago, he studied improvisation with the legendary Del Close. Close was a personality so unpredictable that he has been called "the Ted Kaczynski of modern comedy"; before he died, in 1999, he bequeathed his skull to the Goodman Theatre, in Chicago. His hope was that he could play Yorick into eternity. As the artistic director of the ImprovOlympic, he had a legacy at least as memorable. "One of the great things about Del was that he was a pagan," Colbert said. "When he was teaching, he would take out this pentagram necklace that he wore and flash it at you," he continued. "I've been to my share of new-moon celebrations."

There are no ready pilots for "The Colbert Report." Commercially, Comedy Central is clearly hoping to extend the good fortune and renown of "The Daily Show" another half-hour every night. Everything else seems up for grabs. The idea for the show, Colbert made clear, is to come to the precipice of things and not hesitate. "Del used to say, 'If you come across a rabbit hole, don't step around it. Jump down the hole! See where it leads.' "

—*David Remnick*

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THE FINANCIAL PAGE
A FAREWELL TO ALMS?

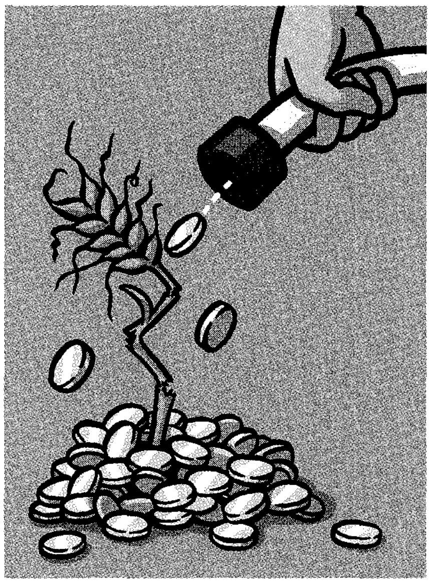
In 1985, when Bob Geldof organized the rock spectacular Live Aid to fight poverty in Africa, he kept things simple. "Give us your fucking money" was his famous (if apocryphal) command to an affluent Western audience—words that embodied Geldof's conviction that charity alone could save Africa. He had no patience for complexity: we were rich, they were poor, let's fix it. As he once said to a luckless official in the Sudan, after seeing a starving person, "I'm not interested in the bloody system! Why has he no food?"

Whatever Live Aid accomplished, it did not save Africa. Twenty years later, most of the continent is still mired in poverty. So when, earlier this month, Geldof put together Live 8, another rock spectacular, the utopian rhetoric was ditched. In its place was talk about the sort of stuff that Geldof once despised—debt-cancellation schemes and the need for "accountability and transparency" on the part of African governments—and, instead of fund-raising, a call for the leaders of the G-8 economies to step up their commitment to Africa. (In other words, don't give us your fucking money; get interested in the bloody system.) Even after the G-8 leaders agreed to double aid to Africa, the prevailing mood was one of cautious optimism rather than euphoria.

That did not matter to the many critics of foreign aid, who mounted a lively backlash against both Live 8 and the G-8 summit. For them, continuing to give money to Africa is simply "pouring billions more down the same old ratholes," as the columnist Max Boot put it. At best, these critics say, it's money wasted; at worst, it turns countries into aid junkies, clinging to the World Bank for their next fix. Instead of looking for help, African countries need to follow the so-called Asian Tigers (countries like South Korea and Taiwan), which overcame poverty by pursuing what Boot called "superior economic policies."

Skepticism about the usefulness of alms to the Third World is certainly in order. Billions of dollars have ended up in the pockets of kleptocratic rulers—in Zaire alone, Mobutu Sese Soko stole at least four billion—and still more has been misspent on massive infrastructure boondoggles, like the twelve-billion-dollar Yacyreta Dam, between Argentina and Paraguay, which Argentina's former President called "a monument to corruption." And historically there has been little correlation between aid and economic growth.

This checkered record notwithstanding, it's a myth that aid is doomed to failure. Foreign aid funded the campaign to eradicate smallpox, and in the sixties it brought the Green Revolution in agriculture to countries like India and Pakistan, lifting living standards and life expectancies for hundreds of millions of people. As for the Asian nations that Africa is being told to emulate, they may have pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, but at least they were provided with boots. In the postwar years, South Korea and Taiwan had the good fortune to become, effectively, client states of the U.S. South Korea received huge infusions of aid, with which it rebuilt its economy after the Korean War. Between 1946 and 1978, in fact, South Korea received nearly as much U.S. aid as the whole of Africa. Meanwhile, the billions that Taiwan got allowed it to fund a vast land-reform program and to eradicate malaria. And the U.S. gave the Asian Tigers more than money; it provided technical assistance and some military defense, and it offered preferential access to American markets.

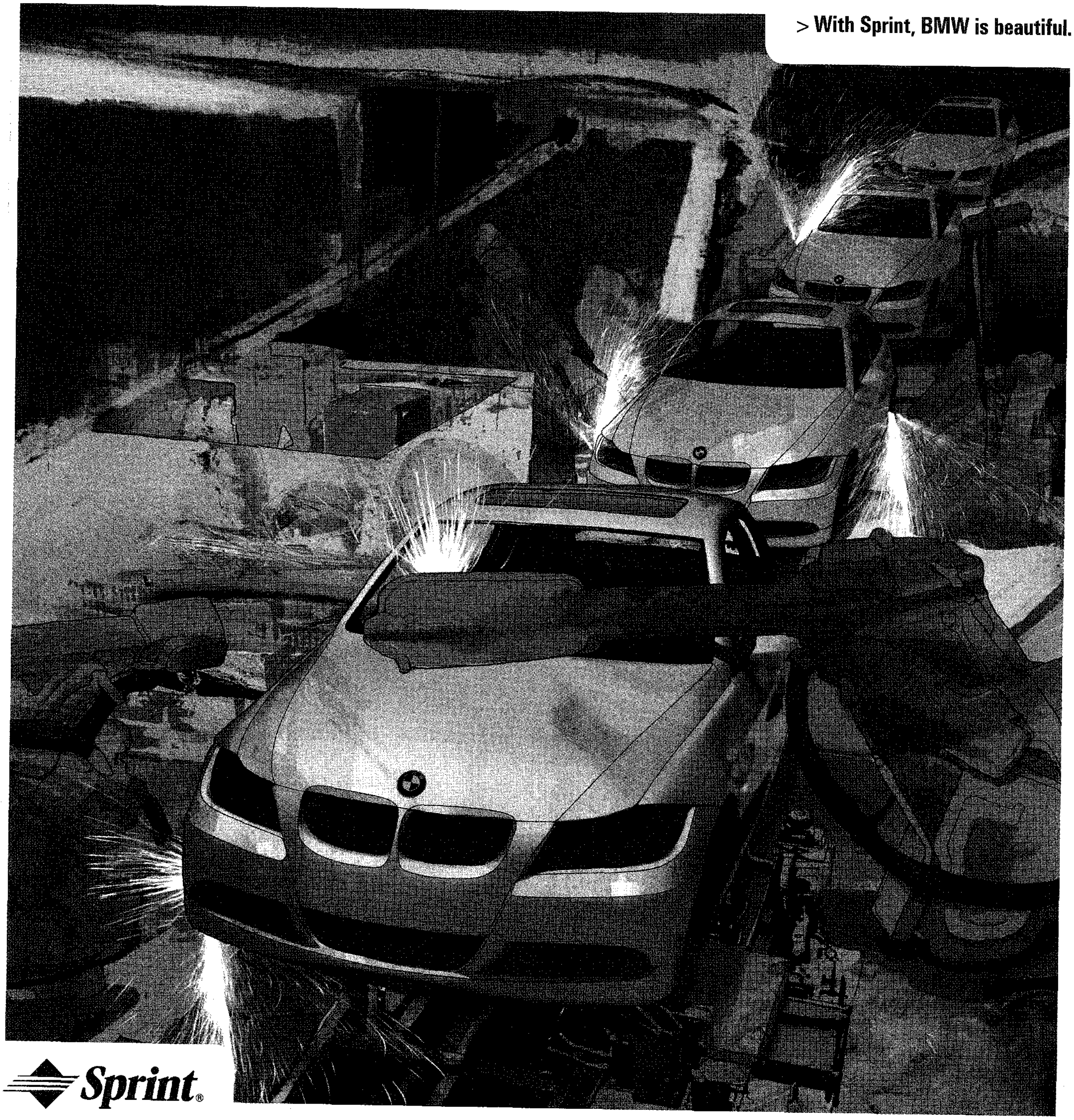


Coincidence? Perhaps. But the two Middle Eastern countries that have shown relatively steady and substantial economic growth—Israel and Turkey—have also received tens of billions of dollars in U.S. aid. The few sub-Saharan African countries that have enjoyed any economic success at all of late—including Botswana, Mozambique, and Uganda—have been major aid recipients, as has Costa Rica, which has the best economy in Central America. Ireland (which is often called the Celtic Tiger), has enjoyed sizable subsidies from the European Union. China was the World Bank's largest borrower for much of the past decade.

Nobody doubts that vast amounts of aid have been squandered, but there are reasons to think that we can improve on that record. In the first place, during the Cold War aid was more often a geopolitical tool than a well-considered economic strategy, so it's not surprising that much of the money was wasted. And we now understand that the kind of aid you give, and the policies of the countries you give it to, makes a real difference. A recent study by three scholars at the Center for Global Development found that, on average, foreign aid that was targeted at stimulating immediate economic growth (as opposed to, say, dealing with imminent crises) has had a significantly beneficial effect, even in Africa.

There's still a lot wrong with the way that foreign aid is administered. Too little attention is paid to figuring out which programs work and which don't, and aid still takes too little advantage of market mechanisms, which are essential to making improvements last. There's plenty we don't know about what makes one country succeed and another fail, and, as the former World Bank economist William Easterly points out, the foreign-aid establishment has often promised in the past that things would be different. So we should approach the problem of aid with humility. Yet humility is no excuse for paralysis. In 2002, President Bush created the Millennium Challenge Account, which is designed to target assistance to countries that adopt smart policies, and said that the U.S. would give five billion dollars in aid by 2006. Three years later, a grand total of $117,500 has been handed out. By all means, let's be tough-minded about aid. But let's not be hardheaded about it.

—*James Surowiecki*



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VATICAN NOTEBOOK

READING RATZINGER

Benedict XVI, the theologian.

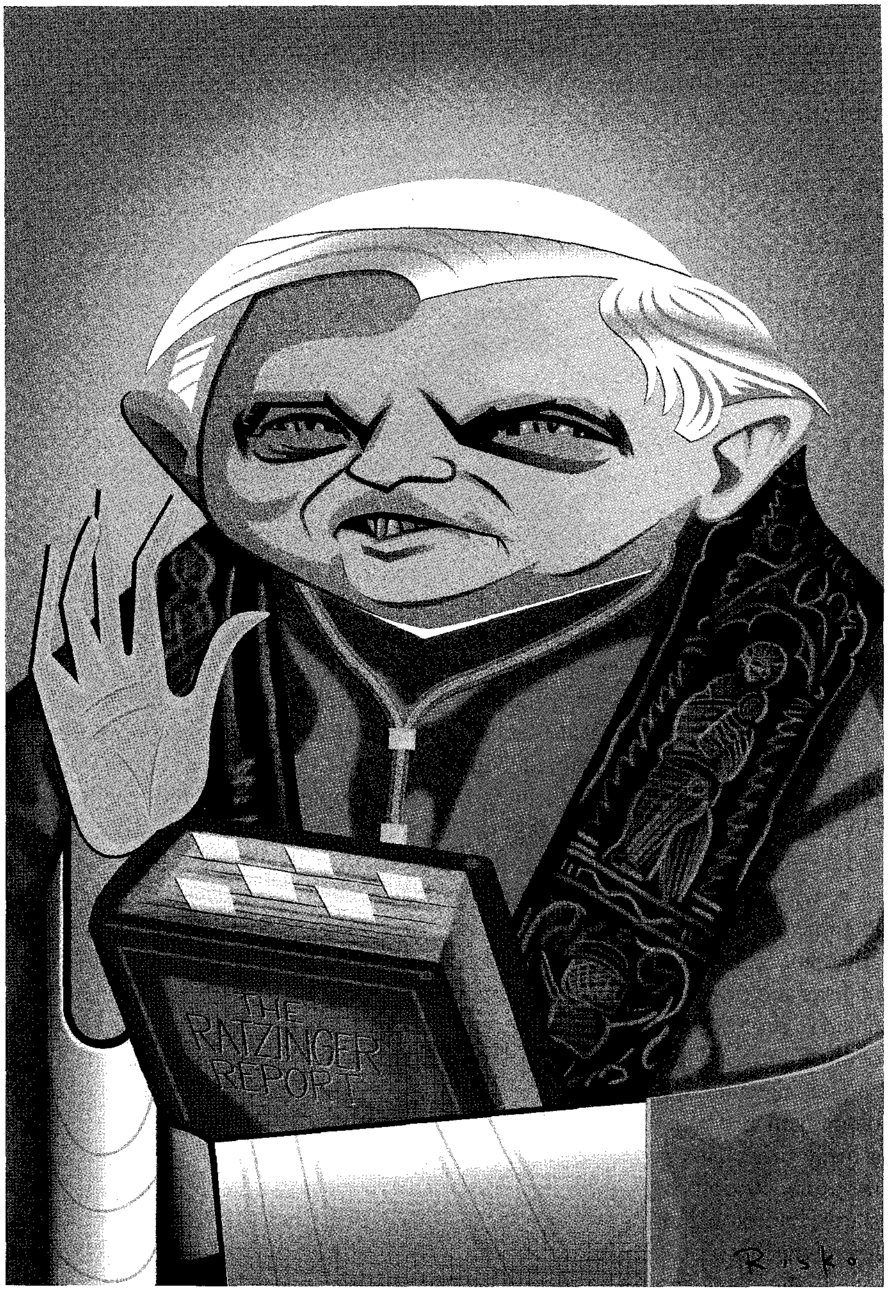
BY ANTHONY GRAFTON

In May, 1984, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger summoned the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff to Rome. In the nineteen-seventies and eighties, Boff had helped create the movement known as liberation theology, working with poor Catholics in Latin America to create small, autonomous groups called "base communities." Influenced by Marxism, the movement redefined Christianity as a critique of the oppressive social and economic order, and it often considered the Roman center of the Church part of that order. In "Church: Charism and Power," a collection of essays published in 1981, Boff argued that the base communities were the core of the true Church: "The Church is directed toward all, but begins from the poor, from their desires and struggles." He justified the base communities as an essential part of the radical changes produced by the Second Vatican Council, in the early nineteen-sixties. These changes included the performance of Mass in the vernacular and a willingness to acknowledge elements of religious truth in other Christian denominations and even in other religions.

At the time, Ratzinger was the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office formerly known as the Inquisition. It was a job he had for nearly twenty-five years, before becoming Pope, last April. When Boff appeared at the yellow palazzo where the Congregation does its work, Ratzinger questioned him on relations between the Catholic Church and Christianity as a whole. In reply, Boff cited Chapter 1, No. 8 of *Lumen Gentium* ("Light of the Nations"), one of the documents of Vatican II, which explained that the true Church "subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines." Boff took this passage as a qualification of the Church's traditional exclusivity.

The history of this paragraph suggests that those who drafted it shared Boff's interpretation. For the first two years of the Council, the draft document stated simply and directly that the mystical body of Christ "is" the Catholic Church. But in the fall of 1964 the word "subsists" was added, together with the passage about elements of truth from outside the Church. The official commentary explained that the change was meant to make the text "more harmonious with the affirmation of ecclesial elements which are elsewhere." The Dominican theologian Yves Congar glossed the passage the way Boff did: "Vatican II acknowledges, in sum, that non-Catholic Christians are members of the mystical body." Ratzinger himself published a short book on Vatican II in which he wrote enthusiastically, if generally, of the Church's new openness.

Yet now, in 1984, Ratzinger read the same text in a very different way. To understand the chapter, he argued, one must bear in mind a theologically weighty noun—*substantia*—closely related to *subsistit*, the verb that the Council fathers had used. *Substantia*, meaning "substance," refers to the essence of a thing (as in "transubstantiation"). According to Ratzinger, when the Council used the verb "subsists" it stated in the strongest terms that the true Church "both is, and can only be, *fully* present" in the Roman Church, with all its hierarchies. *Lumen Gentium*, he argued, offered no support for Christian institutions created without Rome's sanction. Reframing the debate in this way, Ratzinger went well beyond the historical circumstances of the document's origin; nowhere had the drafters mentioned the noun "substance." Ratzinger treated Boff with respect, and listened attentively to



When Ratzinger's career began, professors of theology were academic rock stars.

ROBERT RISKO

his defense of his views, but he did not soften his judgment. After Boff returned to Brazil, the Congregation published a formal critique of his work stating that Boff had drawn from *Lumen Gentium* "a thesis which is exactly the contrary to the authentic meaning of the council text"—that is, to Ratzinger's rather acrobatic interpretation of it. Less than two months later, another notice required Boff to cease writing, editing, and teaching, and to maintain "obedient silence" for an unstated period, a verdict that Boff accepted.

This story, as minute and vivid as a medieval miniature, reveals Ratzinger at work, wielding proof texts that in his hands are as powerful, and as malleable, as articles of the Constitution in the hands of an ideologically partisan jurist. Are such attitudes typical of the new Pope? In his time as Prefect, Ratzinger treated a number of other Catholic dissidents in much the same way. He was a censor, and he did his job well. Liberal observers have for years seen him as the Church's Cerberus, a snapping guard dog who threatens all dissidents with appropriate punishment. Many conservative Catholics, by contrast, revere what they see as the austere purity of his beliefs.

Whatever observers think of Ratzinger's views, all agree that what he does will matter tremendously. The Pope is the spiritual head of the oldest and largest religious organization in the world, a church with more than a billion members. There has been speculation about whether the Grand Inquisitor will show a milder countenance in his new office, but one vital form of evidence about him has generally been ignored. Before Ratzinger became a bishop and a censor, he was a professional theologian. He comes to his work as an intellectual, an academic dedicated to interpretation. For many years, he wrote learnedly on a vast range of questions, from the Church's doctrines to the religious life of the ordinary Christian. My local source of Ratzingeriana—the library of the thoroughly Presbyterian Princeton Theological Seminary—lists a hundred and thirty items by him in its catalogue. Reading Ratzinger provides a way to understand this man as he thinks and reflects, rather than as he reacts to the questions of journalists and the challenges of office. It is also to see that many of his more recent attitudes and actions grow from deep roots in his personal history.

"Milestones," a short autobiography that Ratzinger wrote in the late nineteen-nineties, warmly evokes the world he grew up in—a world of tiny Bavarian towns like Marktl am Inn, where he was born, with little squares surrounded by solid, tile-roofed houses, and bright Christmas shopwindows, "like a wonderful promise." Joseph Ratzinger came from a modest household. His father, a staunch anti-Nazi, was a policeman. Starting at the age of ten, Joseph received a rigorous education at a *Gymnasium*, the classic German high school, and he became an excellent Latinist, which proved important when he was a theological consultant at the Second Vatican Council, where Latin was the official language. The war disrupted Ratzinger's education—still a teen-ager, he was drafted into an anti-aircraft battery—but, as he looks back, his early life seems as clean and neat as a village scene in a snow globe, threatened only by forces outside his and his Church's control: "On the whole, village life continued as it always had."

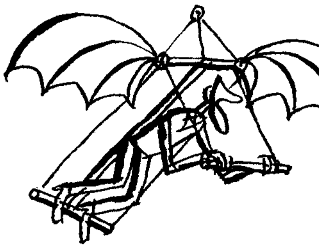
Catholic tradition touched Ratzinger's little world at two points. There was the liturgy—the public life of the Church. From the start, he loved the complex, moving services of village churches, the Mass in which every word and gesture carried meaning: "The Church year gave the time its rhythm, and I experienced that with great gratitude and joy already as a child." His favorite book was "Schott," the richly layered Latin-German missal: "It was a riveting adventure to move by degrees into the mysterious world of the liturgy, which was being enacted before us and for us there on the altar." Although Ratzinger grew up under the Nazis and came to maturity in postwar occupied Germany, he lived most intensely in a world of his own, an enchanted castle of Latin song and prayer, incense and sacraments, which he has spent the rest of his life exploring.

There was also the institution of the Church—the great theologians and prelates whom Ratzinger hoped to emulate. As a seminary student just after the war, he treasured seeing Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber, the Archbishop of Munich, perform Mass in the cathedral: "What moved me deeply about him was the awe-inspiring grandeur of his mission, with which he had become fully identified." Faulhaber, a decent and scholarly man, deplored the Nazis' persecution of Jews and other "non-Aryans," but he failed to protest, seeing the preservation of the Church as his central task.

Ratzinger became a professional theologian in the nineteen-fifties. It was a lively time. Two great Protestant innovators, Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Barth, had pulled down the temples of liberal theology. Bultmann "demythologized" the New Testament, and Barth replaced the certainties of nineteenth-century theology with a powerful emphasis on the radical distance between God and humanity. Meanwhile, young Catholics like Ratzinger were inspired by the writings of Romano Guardini, who stressed meditative spirituality over the formal neo-Thomist theology that had dominated Catholic seminaries. In the evasive public silence of the Federal Republic in the nineteen-fifties, students hungered for messages. Theologians tried to show that the idea of a Creator could still have meaning for people, even in the age of Sartre's "No Exit." By the early sixties, German-speaking professors of theology had become rock stars. The audiences for their lectures filled the largest auditoriums, and publishers competed to print their long, erudite books. Barth appeared on the cover of *Time*.

Catholic theology was at its most provocative in France and Belgium. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin challenged the Church to come to terms with the results of modern science. For Ratzinger, the most important scholars were the Jesuit Henri de Lubac and the Dominicans Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar, who insisted that no doctrinal system could encompass all truths. The Church, they demonstrated, had lived in history, and the modern hierarchy must be willing to accept knowledge from its own past, to steep itself in the long tradition of Catholic theology and exegesis, as well as in contemporary thought. Strikingly, although these thinkers spent their time examining arcane works that even learned Catholics had forgotten, they were often more astute than more conventional theologians in confronting the terrors of the twentieth century. Lubac, for example, saw hatred of the Jews as a violation of true Catholic doctrine; in 1941, he helped create a Catholic Resistance paper, *Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien*, which denounced the anti-Semitic policies of the Nazis and Vichy France.

The young Ratzinger wrote his doctoral dissertation on St. Augustine's ideas about the House and People of God. He realized that he could understand Augustine best by examining his work against the backdrop of North African culture—the culture from which the pagan Augustine came to Italy, and to which he returned a Christian, serving as Bishop of Hippo. North Africa was the center of Donatism, a movement that believed that any priests who, during the recent persecution of the Church, had surrendered their copies of the Scriptures to the Romans must cease to serve, since they would infect the sacraments they dispensed. Augustine argued that the Donatists' refusal to recognize the sacraments when administered by these clerics showed their lack of a fundamental Christian virtue—charity. As Ratzinger put it, "Augustine regards the lack of *caritas* as the defining characteristic of Donatism." The true Church could not be founded on the exclusion of others.



Ratzinger's thesis sparkled with insight into the world of the early Christian Church. Discussing what Augustine meant when he spoke of *mater ecclesia*, "mother church," Ratzinger noted that a recently discovered mosaic from the period showed a complete basilica labelled "*Ecclesia mater*." He took this as evidence that Augustine "was speaking the language of the people," who believed that God would protect those who built a splendid house for his worship. But Ratzinger also showed that Augustine had learned—from pagan Neoplatonists like Plotinus, who felt ashamed that he even had a body—that the highest realities were spiritual, not material. In the end, Ratzinger wrote, Augustine's "People of God" consisted not of any single congregation or building but of a spiritual body united by liturgy and sacrament: "Like the City of God, the People of God, as the community in which the City consists, is identical with the Church, in so far as that is the people on its pilgrimage—that is, that group of the Saints of God who are called from among men." What defined the true Church of the living was its members' common participation in the Eucharist, the central ritual of Christianity. (This definition has remained crucial to Ratzinger in his later roles; for instance, he recently approved the exclusion from the Eucharist of Catholic politicians who defend abortion rights.) In his dissertation, he showed with subtlety and power how one of the greatest of Christian thinkers had learned vital truths from the enemies of his religion.

The complex dialectical relation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, already important in Ratzinger's work on Augustine, became a central question in his *Habilitationsschrift*—the second dissertation required of anyone who wants to become a professor in Germany. This second project, completed in 1959, dealt with Bonaventure, a thirteenth-century Franciscan saint, and, in particular, with his theology of revelation; the thesis was later published in English as "The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure." Trained in Paris, Bonaventure became Minister General of the recently founded

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Franciscan Order. He wrote what became the standard life of St. Francis of Assisi—it was decreed that all other accounts be destroyed—and he did his best to keep the peace between two factions of his fellow-mendicants. At the time, a group of friars known as the Spirituales were insisting on a strict return to the rule of the founder, who, like Jesus, had told his disciples to take no thought for the morrow. A more pragmatic group, known as the Relaxati, accepted the need for the order to own property so that it could educate its members and secure continuity. Bonaventure compromised. He took action against the more radical Spirituales, but also accepted elements of their critique and tried to reform the order as a whole.

Ratzinger showed that Bonaventure had paid close attention to prophetic texts, popular with many Franciscan Spirituales, by the twelfth-century abbot Joachim of Fiore. Joachim claimed that, just as the age of Jesus and Christianity had followed that of the Father and Judaism, so a third age, of the Holy Spirit, would supersede the second. In the third age, which Joachim prophesied would arrive in 1260, men of spirituality would create a new Church, superior to the old one. This vision of history, embodied in spectacular diagrams that posited precise correspondences between the Bible and recent events, proved attractive to clerics who were unhappy with the worldly and legalistic enterprise that the Church had become.

Bonaventure never mentioned Joachim explicitly, and firmly rejected his idea that a third Church could ever replace the second, or that a third prophet would challenge the central position of Jesus. Nonetheless, in Ratzinger's reading, Bonaventure learned from Joachim to see the details of history as the unfolding of a divine plan:

> Scripture points to the future; but only he who has understood the past can grasp the interpretation of the future because the whole of history develops in one unbroken line of meaning in which that which is to come may be grasped in the present on the basis of the past.

Ratzinger saw that Bonaventure accepted one claim of the Spirituales: the patterns of the past revealed that Francis was one of the figures whose appearance had been announced in advance by the Book of Revelation. And he pieced together Bonaventure's interpretation with the meticulous attention to detail of a great restorer reassembling a shattered mosaic. Discussing Revelation 7, where the world is racked with plagues, he notes:

> Four angels stand at the four corners of the earth and create a great silence by holding back the four winds. At this moment, "another angel" ascends from the rising of the sun "with the seal of the living God." He commands the plagues to cease until the servants of God have been marked with the seal of God. They are 144,000 in number.

Taking up the idea of the "seal of God," Ratzinger points out that Francis bore the stigmata: "Had not the seal of the living God—the figure of the crucified Christ—been impressed on the body of the Saint?" Joachim, for his part, had "in brilliant words predicted the coming of the angel with the seal of the living God," who would become the "universal pope of holy Jerusalem." As Revelation and Joachim illuminated one another in Bonaventure's reading and meditation, the Biblical and the modern, the prophecy and the biography became one: "Apocalyptic prophecy and the actualized reality of the life of Francis are woven together for Bonaventure ever more into an insoluble unity." For Ratzinger, Bonaventure's example, like that of Augustine, showed that the most exalted figures in the Church could learn new truths even from men who challenged orthodox doctrine; within carefully prescribed limits, the hierarchy could learn from its heretics.

One of Ratzinger's two readers rejected the greater part of this second dissertation as dangerously subjective, because it argued, in a manner influenced by French theologians, that "revelation," for Bonaventure and his contemporaries, referred not only to Scripture but also to "something greater than what is merely written down," a transaction between God and a "receiving subject." Ratzinger was lucky to pass with an abridged technical study of salvation history. He later recalled that he had shown how Bonaventure, "as a man of the center, had striven to keep what was useful in order to integrate it into the ecclesial order."

The great universities of West Germany competed to attract the young theologian. Hans Küng, a passionately dissident Catholic liberal, helped bring him to the University of Tübingen. This sleepy-looking half-timbered town has served as a seedbed of German academic talent ever since the Renaissance, when the astronomer Johannes Kepler studied there. Ratzinger succeeded brilliantly. He collected a throng of pupils so loyal that many of them returned every summer, year after year, for intensive private seminars with him. Through the nineteen-sixties, most Catholics saw Ratzinger as a theological liberal, and it is easy to understand why. Having had his own work censored in his youth, by narrow-minded theologians who did not share his interest in the new ideas from France and elsewhere, he "made the resolve not to agree easily to the rejection of dissertations" but, whenever possible, "to take the side of the weaker party." Intellectually, he took the French position that Catholicism itself existed in history, and that its intellectual borders had always been permeable, even if its core remained unchanged.

But Ratzinger was never quite so open as Küng and others who saw him as an ally in the sixties. His books may have dealt with the ways in which great churchmen had learned from outside sources, but they also showed how these churchmen had defeated challenges to orthodoxy. In public, too, Ratzinger steered a more careful, traditional course. He attended Vatican II as a *peritus*, or theological expert, in the entourage of Cardinal Josef Frings, the liberal Archbishop of Cologne. Frings caused a sensation at the Council by denouncing the Inquisition as a "scandal" and calling for radical reform in its procedures. Applause broke out, against the Council's rules. A consensus seemed to have emerged about the need to open the windows of the Catholic world. Many thought—many still think—that it was the youthful Ratzinger who raised this call for radical change. But Frings's biographer Norbert Trippen examined the surviving draft of the speech. Ratzinger, he showed, chose the loaded term "scandal," but the old Cardinal, not the young adviser, added the sharp attacks on Inquisition procedures which gave the speech its precision and its bite.

In the late sixties, when politicized students began to confront their professors, life at Tübingen, as elsewhere, became one long series of provocations and responses.

It is not clear what opposition Ratzinger encountered, but it is certain that he responded to the radicals with a radical change of course of his own. In 1969, he moved to a recently founded, highly conservative university at Regensburg. Then, in 1977, he accepted a papal invitation to become the Archbishop of Munich-Freising, the start of a new career that soon took him to Rome and into the upper reaches of the Church hierarchy. In these years of struggle and ascent, Ratzinger's views of the Church and the world crystallized.

In an extended interview he gave in 1984, later published as "The Ratzinger Report," Ratzinger expounded on the legacy of the sixties, noting that "many Catholics moved from a narrow, inward-fixed Christianity to an uncritical openness to the world." He saw this as a dangerous development, a result largely of the expansion of the European universities, which had produced a "new tertiary-educated bourgeoisie with its liberal-radical ideology of individualistic rationalistic hedonistic character." Catholic teachers forgot the coherent vision that underpinned the old catechisms and wrote new ones that they tried to make ecumenical and palatable. In Latin America, people confused the liberation offered by the Church with social and economic liberation, while rich Westerners mistook it for a license for sexual experimentation.

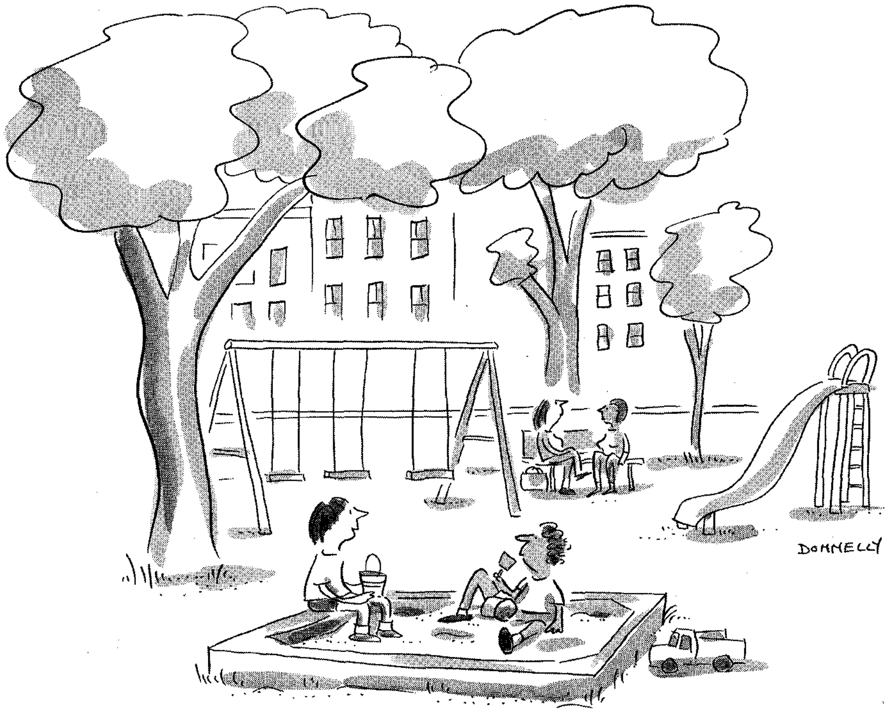
To Ratzinger, the world of the sixties looked rather like a vast and frightening engraving in the manner of Gustave Doré, in which fanged demons of sensuality and "liberal-radical libertarian culture" attacked the few angels who still tried to defend God's Gothic, pinnacled towers. The enchanted castle had become—in Martin Luther's terms—a "mighty fortress," and the world outside it was evil and threatening, just as when the Nazis tried to de-Christianize Germany. Ratzinger expressed these views again and again—for example, in a lecture, "The Situation of the Church Today," which he read before more than eight hundred priests in Cologne Cathedral in 1970. Invited to give a eulogy for Cardinal Frings on the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination, Ratzinger barely mentioned his former mentor. Instead, he denounced the intellectuals who confused social reform with Christianity and the ecumenists who thought all religions equal. The vast cargo of erudition that Ratzinger had accumulated over the decades he now mobilized, as he saw it, on behalf of ordinary Christians and the honest clerics who served them. Only faith, he told the priests, not reason, would never err:

> Surprisingly, this secure vision is often to be found far better established in simple believers than where Reflection is advertised with a capital R. The intellect does not always grant vision, but provides the conditions for intellectual games, and artfully conjures syntheses into existence where there is really nothing but contradiction. This is no rejection of intellect and reflection, but a reference to their limits and to their dangerous corruptibility.

Ratzinger now described the limits and dangers of his specialty more eloquently than its potential for good.

As bishop and cardinal, as professor and censor, the later, hard-edged Ratzinger developed a strikingly coherent intellectual style. To begin with, there is the formal theologian, the man of the word. When Ratzinger takes on a particular theological issue, he starts from the words of Jesus in the Gospels and the whole mass of scholarship devoted to them. In his book "Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life" (1977), for example, he addresses "the doctrine of the last things," known as eschatology. He acknowledges that, at times, Jesus seems to have predicted the imminent coming of a literal new world, a "Kingdom of God," but he emphasizes that the words of the Gospel are not in themselves sufficient. To understand Jesus, you must know what his words meant in their historical context. You must also compare the multiple versions of Jesus' words; the Gospels do not offer an absolutely uniform account and must be experienced as "a choir of four." In addition, anyone who hopes to understand the *eschaton* must compare Christian texts on death and the afterlife with those of pagans and Jews, which influenced the Christian vision of a kingdom of God. Some rabbis had already preached that "redemption, the days of the Messiah, could be brought nearer through repentance, keeping the commandments and good works."

Ratzinger's way into a problem, then, leads through the old scholarly crafts of history and philology and the higher theological arts of hermeneutics and exegesis. He uses these tools to construct a vast argumentative structure out of solid German footnotes, mortared together with tough, sticky material from the whole range of theological and exegetical scholarship. If the foundations of this edifice are solid and heavy, its pinnacles are a high and delicately detailed tracery of paradox. The coming kingdom of God, for example, turns out to be around us all the time, even though believing Chris-



"I'm staying together for the sake of my parents."

"And, for insurance purposes, you must buy insurance."

• •

tians await its definitive arrival in the future: "The answer to the question of the Kingdom is, therefore, no other than the Son in whom the unbridgeable gulf between already and not yet is spanned."

Ratzinger never shrinks from asserting the scriptural doctrines that are hardest for weak-minded moderns to accept: "No quibbling helps here: the idea of eternal damnation, which had taken ever clearer shape in the Judaism of the century or two before Christ, has a firm place in the teaching of Jesus." But he always finds unexpected and productive ways of dealing with such doctrines—of finding a deeper meaning in them—in the later history of the Church:

> In the history of holiness which hagiology offers us, and notably in the course of recent centuries, in John of the Cross, in Carmelite piety in general, and in that of Thérèse of Lisieux in particular, "Hell" has taken on a completely new meaning and form. For the saints, "Hell" is not so much a threat to be hurled at other people but a challenge to oneself. It is a challenge to suffer in the dark night of faith, to experience communion with Christ *in solidarity with his descent into the* Night. One draws near to the Lord's radiance by sharing his darkness.

Still, for Ratzinger historical context is only necessary, never sufficient. If you simply read Scripture as its first contemporaries would have, it remains dead, confined to the past and to the page, for God has continued to reveal to Catholics, over the centuries, truths that the Bible's original readers could not have seen. The divine providence that guides the Church has enabled Catholic thinkers to assemble—from dozens of Biblical passages and also from the Fathers of the Church, the declarations of councils, and the pronouncements of Popes—a magnificent patchwork of doctrines and beliefs, varied in the origins of its ingredients but coherent and perfect in its final design. Like the Orthodox Jews who believe that an oral Torah guards and interprets Scripture, Ratzinger treats later revelations to God's Church as what the ancient rabbi Akiva called "a fence for the law"—a vital protection for the written Bible and, at the same time, part of the Word of God in its own right.

Ratzinger's vision of Revelation encompasses texts by Jews and Greeks, and by Catholic writers of all eras, including contemporary theologians. Ratzinger regularly acknowledges the theological insights that he himself has gleaned from reading a vast variety of non-Christian literature, from the modern writings of Martin Buber, which cast the relations between man and God in a vital new light, to ancient Jewish teachings on the Shekhina, or divine presence, which helped Ratzinger express the way in which the Christian God "is present among us whenever we are gathered together in his name." To that extent, the early Ratzinger—who saw that the core of Christianity was strengthened by the looseness of its external borders—has continued to speak eloquently in the writings of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

When Ratzinger discusses materials from outside the Catholic world, he is always workmanlike and respectful. His work on eschatology, for example, provides brief, thoughtful introductions to Jewish and Greek visions of time, history, and the soul. These are dense, packed with information. They resemble the Western Civ lectures of an experienced and effective teacher, and, like Western Civ lectures, they are not always up to date. Writing in the seventies, Ratzinger sharply contrasted the linear time of the Jews with the cyclical time of the Greeks, as Oscar Cullmann had in the late nineteen-forties, although in the interim the Old Testament scholar James Barr and the historian Arnaldo Momigliano had shown that this sharp contrast cannot stand.

The more recent or secular the ideas or practices that Ratzinger discusses, the more likely he is to describe them with a strikingly flat vocabulary—the affect-free language of an administrator, writing from within the machine. In "The Ratzinger Report," for example, he explained that by the mid-eighties the Church had already taken on board everything of permanent worth that modernity had to teach:

> The problem in the sixties was to take on the best values that two hundred years of "liberal" culture had produced. For there are values that, though they appeared outside the Church, yet, suitably purified and corrected, have their place in its world-view. And that has taken place.

Eamon Duffy, a brilliant historian of the Church who teaches at Cambridge, was only one of many Catholic intellectuals whom these comments infuriated:

> This is breath-taking in its superficiality. "Values" are not detachable entities which can be removed from the structures—intellectual, social, political, economic—which give them shape and coherence. They are not pills which (suitably gilded) can be swallowed painlessly, taking care not to exceed the stated dose. *Really* to "take on" the "best values of liberal culture" would involve for the Church deep structural transformations.

The criticism is legitimate. For Ratzinger, it seems, liberalism is another alien creed, like Judaism but far less profound, and consists of "values" that can easily be identified, summed up, and extracted for Christian use." These views have dramatic implications. In a recent column in the *Times*, Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna surprised those who believed that the Catholic faith had come to an accommodation with Darwin by arguing that the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution is "ideology, not science." To support this claim, he cited no scientific data; rather, he cited "the real teaching of our beloved John Paul"—clear proof that he has no idea what science is, or, for that matter, ideology. His rhetoric was classic Ratzinger—asserting that those who had perceived a softening in the Church's teaching were mistaken. There is every reason to believe that Ratzinger shares the Cardinal's impoverished understanding of the scientific enterprise, and that his views will shape Catholic teaching on a wide range of scientific and medical issues.

Ratzinger's descriptions of the Church's ancient ritual life and dogmas, meanwhile, are as "thick" as his analyses of foreign ideologies are "thin." When Ratzinger traces the complex interplay of Church architecture, priestly speech and gesture, music, and congregational response present in a single Mass, or patiently explains those doctrines, like the Immaculate Conception, which seem most alien to a rationalist turn of mind, his discourse glows with local color and detail. His deep love for the Catholic past is manifest whenever he engages in the priestly acts that clearly mean the most to him. Young Catholics describe with phosphorescent enthusiasm the delicacy and devotion with which Ratzinger celebrates Mass. His loving eulogy for John Paul II, and the funeral Mass over which he presided, filled Cardinals and pilgrims alike with affection for him, and helped him win rapid election as Pope. It is telling that, when devising his new coat of arms, Benedict XVI chose not to use the traditional papal crown on the crest, which would symbolize the Pope's worldly power, but, rather, a simple mitre, emphasizing his role as Bishop of Rome.

"Theory," says Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust, "is gray, but the golden tree of life springs ever green." Ratzinger, in the end, sees all traditions and historical experiences outside his own as gray, while the castle of Catholic tradition that he inhabits is suffused with the deep reds and blues of stained glass and the flame of candles:

> What does Corpus Christi mean to me? Well, first of all it brings back memories of special feast days when we took quite literally what Thomas Aquinas put so well in one of his Corpus Christi hymns: *Quantum potes tantum aude*—dare to do as much as you can, giving him due praise. . . . I can still smell those carpets of flowers and the freshness of the birch trees; I can see all the houses decorated, the banners, the singing; I can still hear the village band, which indeed sometimes dared more, on this occasion, than it was able!

In some sense, Ratzinger may be right: the form of our devotions certainly shapes our religious experience. Even in the secularized West, religions and denominations from Catholicism to Reform Judaism have found that a liturgy rich with music and cast in a sacred language continues to attract and hold worshippers. Yet Ratzinger's passion for a particular world of Catholic beliefs and devotions is more than a recipe for a revived Catholic worship. His emotional vision underpins and buttresses at every point the doctrinal structures that he has made as a scholar. In the end, it determines what he can accept as suitable and what he rejects. As the organ and liturgy drown out the weaker voices of liberal critics, as the searchlight of orthodoxy retrospectively reveals the errors of Leonardo Boff and other dissidents, the Pope and the magisterium—the centralized authority of Roman Catholic wisdom—have no need to look outside for enlightenment.

So at least the Cardinal thought, as he paced the battlements of the Church's "mighty fortress" and interrogated dissident clerics. So he continues, at times, to argue, as when he condemns the use of condoms to fight AIDS in Africa. But the successor to John Paul II cannot stay within the castle. The Pope's job demands things that Ratzinger's old position as censor did not, and he is a man of duty, who does what he is called to do. It will be fascinating to see if the young scholar, with his passion for learning from the dissidents, sometimes reappears in the imperious prelate whose mission now requires him not only to judge the city and the world from inside the walls of the Curia but also to confront and try to save them. On the other hand, last week's revelation that the new Pope a few years ago endorsed a German critic's attack on the Harry Potter books suggests it doesn't take much to startle and send him back inside the walls of his fortress. A prelate who fears that the "subtle seductions" of J. K. Rowling will stunt the spiritual growth of young Christians may find it harder than he thinks to take on modernity in all its sprawling strangeness. ♦

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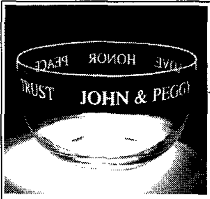

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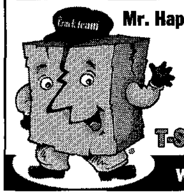

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

MY DOG IS TOM CRUISE

BY NOAH BAUMBACH

I have to tell you, things are good. I am . . . I am . . . *Whooo!* . . . I am very good. I just returned from a walk and . . . HA! Things. Are. Good. I've got a bowl of hard kibble with some soft stuff mixed in. My name's on the bowl! I am passionate about this lamb-and-rice recipe. What's been going on? HAHA! I'm so in love with this bitch! HAHAHA! I can't . . . I'm so . . . I can't restrain myself. HAHAHAHAHAHA! We met at the park. She was in the run for little dogs . . . 'cause she's, well . . . HA! She's petite. And I was over in the big run and . . . I am in *love*. I can't be cool. This bitch is . . . I have total respect for her. Yesterday on my five o'clock, I just sniffed her ass for a while and then we frolicked. I can't even describe it . . . we chased squirrels . . . frisked, you know . . . she likes to be physical, too . . . and to fetch and . . . We're like anyone. We tore into this shoe and just had a ball. I'll see her tomorrow on my 8 A.M. I am happy. I am . . . HAHAHAHAHAHA! She is a wonderful, wonderful animal. I can't . . . words don't . . . OWOOOOO! I can't sit or stay, man. I need to get up on my hind legs and holler, you know! I gotta pee on something. And I don't care what the other animals do or what their masters say. Listen, there are always gonna be pit bulls. There are always gonna be Dobermans. And cynical little pugs. And you know what? I've never cared what others think about me. I've always been this way. I'm living my life. And I am fortunate. And I am excited. I am fortunate and excited.

Do you know the history of crate training? 'Cause I do. Don't talk about things you don't understand. Like saying dogs are wild. Dogs are wild—that is glib. Dogs are . . . I've done the research; there are crates that they put us in to quote unquote train us. They throw rattlesnakes at us. Electric-shock tags! I'm not making this up. This is . . . it's history. Crate training just masks the problem. These dogs, they become zombies. You can totally handle disobedience naturally by saying "No!" and "Bad dog!" It works. Look at the *facts*. Shock tags?! I am disgusted.

HAHAHA! I fetch! Boy, I love to fetch. I am totally fired up when I fetch. And nap. I've got a great dog bed with leopard spots where I can power-nap, man. I've got awesome chew toys, too. I'm passionate about this rubber T-bone with peanut butter hidden in it. Here's the point: do you know there are strays on the street eating out of the Dumpsters behind Chinese restaurants? I'm not making that up. I care about those mutts. But they don't know what the options are. They don't know that you can live in an apartment and get fed by a human. These hounds, man—when it thunders, they think the world is ending. Because they haven't done the research. Do you know the statistics? A hundred and fifty dogs are being fixed every ten minutes. A hundred and fifty. Every ten minutes. I can't . . . that's just wrong. And I speak out about it.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

There's this yellow Lab, Clover, who I see in the dog run. And this is a totally great purebred. He's a . . . HA! He's . . . he's a great guy. I've got enormous respect for him. But he's overweight. You know why? 'Cause they're feeding him scraps from the table. And he can't fetch or chase without getting winded. That is sad. I care about him, and I care about the apricot poodle with the plaid socks on his feet, and I care about the basenji with the drooling issues. I want to hear good news. I like to see a Rottweiler get a bath or a shepherd savor a Milk-Bone. That makes me happy.

What these beggars don't understand is that if you hover around the dinner table long enough and you're observant food will come. Food's gonna come naturally, man. They're gonna drop stuff and you can—HAHAHAHAHA! But, seriously, begging is a huge issue among our species. I did the research. And I speak out. I speak out about *misinformation*. Do you know people think that one dog year is seven human years? That is false. Total fabrication. It's approximate. Flea and tick collars? There are vitamins for that. And your master can totally put that capsule in a slab of butter and you'll never know you ate it.

OWOOOWOWOWOOO!!! This bitch, she's kind, she's caring, she's a wonderful, wonderful dog. It's like . . . wow. And I don't want to compare, but I've never felt this way before. We might have a litter. One thing at a time. It's joy, man. That's what it is. Look at my tail! I'm panting 24/7. HAHAHAHA! I purr, even. Like a cat, man. The cat looks at me and he's, like, "What did they put in your kibble?" HAHA! I don't care. I've never cared what that cat thinks. But I care about him even though he's a cynic. I care about the glib parakeet and those jerks the gerbils, but I'm not sure those are the same gerbils as before. HAHAHA! Those gerbils! We have fun. I bark, they run on the wheel. What's that? The leash jingling! Is it eight already? *Walk*?! OWOOOHAHAHAHAHAHARUFFRUFFRUFFHA!!! I love living my life! ♦

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GET OUT THE VOTE

Did Washington try to manipulate Iraq's election?

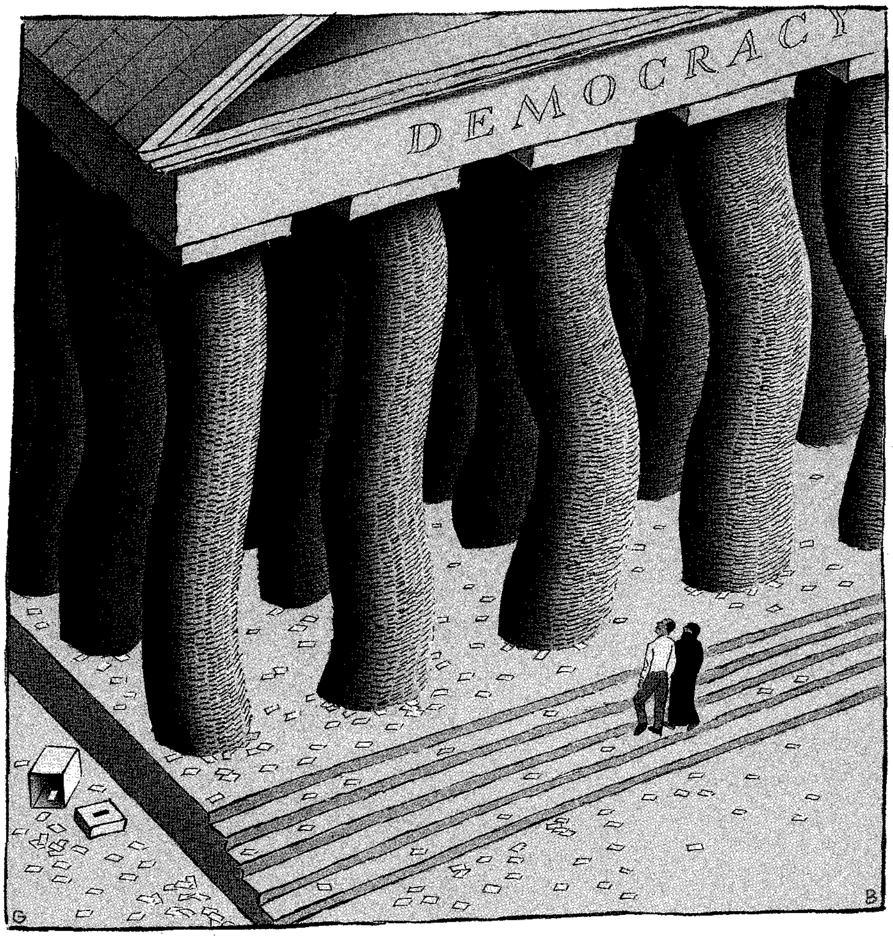
BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

The January 30th election in Iraq was publicly perceived as a political triumph for George W. Bush and a vindication of his decision to overturn the regime of Saddam Hussein. More than eight million Iraqis defied the threats of the insurgency and came out to vote for provincial councils and a national assembly. Many of them spent hours waiting patiently in line, knowing that they were risking their lives. Images of smiling Iraqis waving purple index fingers, signifying that they had voted, were transmitted around the world. Even some of the President's harshest critics acknowledged that he might have been right: democracy, as he defined it, could take hold in the Middle East. The fact that very few Sunnis, who were dominant under Saddam Hussein, chose to vote was seen within the Administration as a temporary setback. The sense of victory faded, however, amid a continued political stalemate, increased violence, and a hardening of religious divides. After three months of bitter sectarian infighting, a government was finally formed. It is struggling to fulfill its primary task: to draft a new constitution by mid-August.

Whether the election could sustain its promise had been in question from the beginning. The Administration was confronted with a basic dilemma: The likely winner of a direct and open election would be a Shiite religious party. The Shiites were bitter opponents of Saddam's regime, and suffered under it, but many Shiite religious and political leaders are allied, to varying degrees, with the mullahs of Iran. As the election neared, the Administration repeatedly sought ways—including covert action—to manipulate the outcome and reduce the religious Shiite influence. Not everything went as planned.

The initial election plan, endorsed in late 2003 by Paul Bremer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, involved a caucus system in which the C.P.A. would be able to exert enormous influence over the selection of a transitional government. Each major ethnic group—the Shiites, who represent sixty per cent of the population; the Sunnis, with twenty per cent; and the Kurds, with around fifteen per cent—would have a fixed number of seats in a national assembly. The U.S. hoped to hold the election before the transfer of sovereignty, which was scheduled for June 30, 2004, but the lack of security made the deadline unrealistic. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of one of the Shiite parties, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI, agreed to accept a delay, as the U.S. wanted, in return for the White House's commitment to hold a direct one-man, one-vote election. President Bush agreed. It was a change in policy that many in the Administration feared would insure a Shiite majority in the new assembly.

The obstacles to a free election, in a country with shallow democratic roots, suffering from years of dictatorship, a foreign invasion, and an insurgency, were immense. As Larry Diamond, a senior adviser to the C.P.A., warned Bremer in a March, 2004, memorandum, "Political parties that have never contested democratic elections before tend to fall back upon their worst instincts and experience. They buy votes, and frequently they buy electoral officials. . . . They use armed thugs to intimidate opposition, and even to assassinate opponents. . . . They may use force and fraud to steal or stuff the ballot boxes."



On Election Day, the system's weaknesses and the potential for abuse were evident.

GUY BILLOUT

In a second memo, Diamond noted that SCIRI and Dawa, the other major Shiite party, as well as more militant Shiite paramilitary groups, were believed to be receiving funding and training from

Iran. "Most of the other political parties complain of the difficulty of finding the financial resources to organize, mobilize support, and prepare to contest elections," Diamond wrote. "Several have appealed directly, if discreetly, for some kind of international assistance, including from the United States."

He urged Bremer to set up a transparent fund that would distribute operating cash equitably to all political parties. "Alternative mechanisms to level the playing field are unlikely to work," Diamond wrote. Specifically, he argued against giving money covertly to favored parties, such as the slate controlled by Iyad Allawi, the acting Prime Minister, a secular Shiite, who was a staunch American ally. During the Cold War, he noted in his second memo, the United States "channeled covert resources to political parties that appeared more moderate and democratic, and more pro-Western. That is no longer possible or sensible."

Diamond received no official response from Bremer or from Condoleezza Rice, the national-security adviser, to whom he forwarded the memorandums. In his recent book, "Squandered Victory," Diamond, who had previously worked with Rice, argued that the Bush Administration bungled the occupation. In April, he returned to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, where he is a senior fellow.

In his meetings with political leaders in Iraq before the election, Diamond told me, "I said, matter-of-factly, that of course the United States could not operate the way we did in the Cold War. We had to be fair and transparent in everything we did, if we were really interested in promoting democracy—I took it as simply an article of faith."

By the late spring of 2004, according to officials in the State Department, Congress, and the United Nations, the Bush Administration was engaged in a debate over the very issue that Diamond had warned about: providing direct support to Allawi and other parties seen as close to the United States and hostile to Iran. Allawi, who had spent decades in exile and worked both for Saddam Hussein's Mukhabarat and for Western intelligence agencies, lacked strong popular appeal. The goal, according to several former intelligence and military officials, was not to achieve outright victory for Allawi—such an outcome would not be possible or credible, given the strength of the pro-Iranian Shiite religious parties—but to minimize the religious Shiites' political influence. The Administration hoped to keep Allawi as a major figure in a coalition government, and to do so his party needed a respectable share of the vote.

The main advocate for channelling aid to preferred parties was Thomas Warrick, a senior adviser on Iraq for the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, who was backed, in this debate, by his superiors and by the National Security Council. Warrick's plan involved using forty million dollars that had been appropriated for the election to covertly provide cell phones, vehicles, radios, security, administrative help, and cash to the parties the Administration favored. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor resisted this plan, and turned to three American non-governmental organizations that have for decades helped to organize and monitor elections around the world: the National Democratic Institute (N.D.I.), the International Republican Institute (I.R.I.), and the National Endowment for Democracy (N.E.D.).

"It was a huge debate," a participant in the discussions told me. "Warrick said he had gotten the Administration principals"—senior officials of the State Department, the Pentagon, and the National Security Council—"to agree." The N.G.O.s "were fighting a rearguard action to get this election straight," and emphasized at meetings that "the idea of picking favorites never works," he said.

"There was a worry that a lot of money was being put aside in walking-around money for Allawi," the participant in the discussions told me. "The N.G.O.s said, 'We don't do this—and, in any case, it's crazy, because if anyone gets word of this manipulation it'll ruin what could be a good thing. It's the wrong way to do it.' The N.G.O.s tried to drive a stake into the heart of it."

Over the summer and early fall of 2004, the N.G.O.s arranged meetings with several senior officials, including John Negroponte, who was then the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. A pattern developed, the participant in the discussions said. The N.G.O.s, he recounted, would

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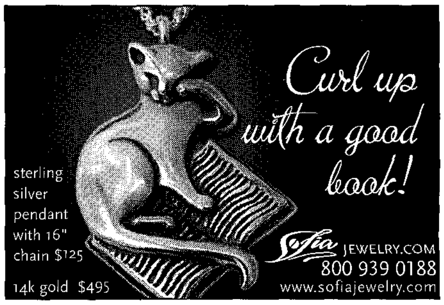

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say, "We're not going to work with this if there's people out there passing around money. We will not be part of any covert operation, and we need your word that the election will be open and transparent," and the officials would reassure them. Within weeks of a meeting, the N.G.O.s would "still hear word of a Track II—a covert group," the participant said. "The money was to be given to Allawi and others."

A European election expert who was involved in planning the Iraqi election recalled that Warrick "was always negative about the Shiites and their ties to the Iranians. He thought he could manipulate the election by playing with the political process, and he pushed the N.G.O.s on it really hard."

Les Campbell, the regional director of the N.D.I. for the Middle East and North Africa, told me that he immediately realized "how deep the American desire to do something to help Allawi was." Campbell acknowledged that he and his colleagues had kept up a running dispute with Warrick. At first, it seemed that the N.G.O.s had won, and the forty million dollars was given in grants for the N.G.O.s to help plan and monitor the election. But the pressure from the Administration to provide direct support for specific parties was unrelenting, and Warrick's idea didn't go away. As the campaign progressed, Campbell said, "It became clear that Allawi and his coalition had huge resources, although nothing was flowing through normal channels. He had very professional and very sophisticated media help and saturation television coverage."

The focus on Allawi, Campbell said, blinded the White House to some of the realities on the ground. "The Administration was backing the wrong parties in Iraq," he said. "We told them, 'The parties you like are going to get creamed.' They didn't believe it."

"What Tom Warrick was trying to do was not stupid," a senior United Nations official who was directly involved in planning for the Iraqi election told me. "He was desperate, because Bremer and the White House had empowered the Iranians. Warrick was trying to see what could be salvaged." He added that the answer, as far as the United States was concerned, was Allawi, who, despite his dubious past, was "the nearest thing to an Iraqi with whom the White House could salvage the nation."

A State Department official confirmed that there was an effort to give direct funding to certain candidates. "The goal was to level the playing field, and Allawi was not the sole playing field," he said. Warrick was not operating on his own, the State Department official said. "This issue went to high levels, and was approved"—within the State Department and by others in the Bush Administration, in the late spring of 2004. "A lot of people were involved in it and shared the idea," including, he claimed, some of the N.G.O. operatives working in Iraq. He added, "The story that should be written is why the neoconservatives and others in the U.S. government who were hostile to Iran had this blind spot when it came to the election"—that is, why they endorsed a process that, as Warrick and his colleagues saw it, would likely bring pro-Iranian parties to power.

In any case, the State Department official said, Richard Armitage, the Deputy Secretary of State under Colin Powell, put an end to Warrick's efforts in the early fall. Armitage confirmed this, and told me that he believed that he was carrying out the President's wishes. "There was a question at a principals' meeting about whether we should try and change the vote," Armitage recalled, and the President said several times, "We will not put our thumb on the scale."

CASINO ECONOMY
Please! I'm so late!
Ante up, fish.
No, really, baby needs new shoes.
ZILCH
FREE SPIN
GAS SLOTS
GROCERY POKER
WHEEL OF SHOES

Nonetheless, in the same time period, former military and intelligence officials told me, the White House promulgated a highly classified Presidential "finding" authorizing the C.I.A. to provide money and other support covertly to political candidates in certain countries who, in the Administration's view, were seeking to spread democracy. "The finding was general," a recently retired high-level C.I.A. official told me. "But there's no doubt that Baghdad was a stop on the way. The process is under the control of the C.I.A. and the Defense Department."

It is not known why the President would reject one program to intervene in the election and initiate another, more covert one. According to Pentagon consultants and former senior intelligence officials, there was a growing realization within the White House that most Sunnis would indeed boycott the election. Getting accurate polls in a country under occupation, with an active insurgency, was, of course, difficult. But the available polls showed Allawi's ratings at around three or four per cent through most of 2004, and also showed the pro-Iranian Shiite slate at more than fifty per cent. The Administration had optimistically assumed that the political and security situation would improve, despite warnings from the intelligence community that it would not.

A former senior intelligence official told me, "The election clock was running down, and people were panicking. The polls showed that the Shiites were going to run off with the store. The Administration had to do something. How?"

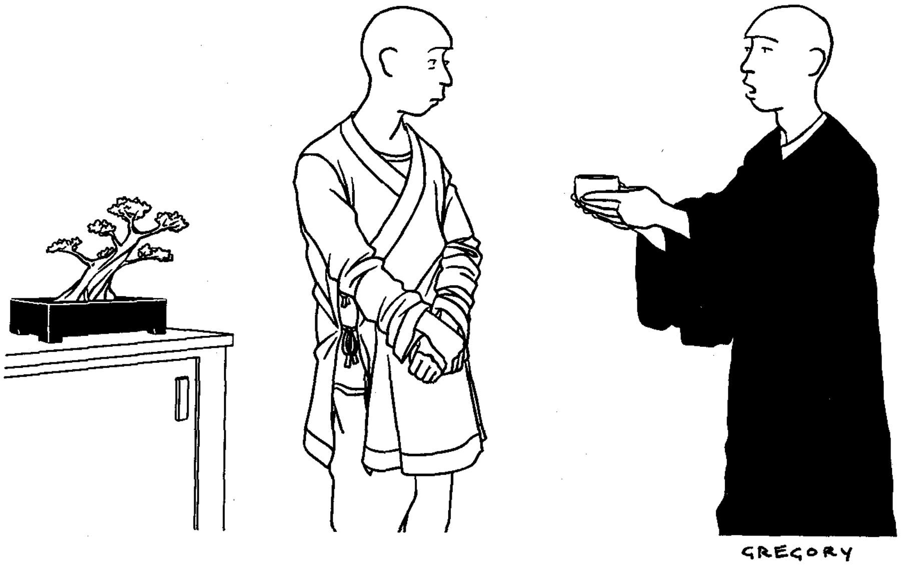
By then, the men in charge of the C.I.A. were "dying to help out, and make sure the election went the right way," the recently retired C.I.A. official recalled. It was known inside the intelligence community, he added, that the Iranians and others were providing under-the-table assistance to various factions. The concern, he said, was that "the bad guys would win."

Under federal law, a finding must be submitted to the House and Senate intelligence committees or, in exceptional cases, only to the intelligence committee chairs and ranking members and the Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress. At least one Democrat, Nancy Pelosi, the House Minority Leader, strongly protested any interference in the Iraqi election. (An account of the dispute was published in *Time* last October.) The recently retired C.I.A. official recounted angrily, "She threatened to blow the whole thing up in the press by going public. The White House folded to Pelosi." And, for a time, "she brought it to a halt." Pelosi would not confirm or deny this account, except, in an e-mail from her spokesman, to "vigorously" deny that she had threatened to go public. She added, "I have never threatened to make any classified information public. That's against the law." (The White House did not respond to requests for comment.)

The essence of Pelosi's objection, the recently retired high-level C.I.A. official said, was: "Did we have eleven hundred Americans die"—the number of U.S. combat deaths as of last September—"so they could have a rigged election?"

Sometime after last November's Presidential election, I was told by past and present intelligence and military officials, the Bush Administration decided to override Pelosi's objections and covertly intervene in the Iraqi election. A former national-security official told me that he had learned of the effort from "people who worked the beat"—those involved in the operation. It was necessary, he added, "because they couldn't afford to have a disaster."

A Pentagon consultant who deals with the senior military leadership acknowledged that the American authorities in Iraq "did an operation" to try to influence the results of the election. "They had to," he said. "They were trying to make a case that Allawi was popular, and he had no juice." A government consultant with close ties to the Pentagon's civilian leaders said, "We didn't want to take a chance."



"Possible side effects include disharmony, lack of oneness, and blurred third-eye vision."

I was informed by several former military and intelligence officials that the activities were kept, in part, "off the books"—they were conducted by retired C.I.A. officers and other non-government personnel, and used funds that were not necessarily appropriated by Congress. Some in the White House and at the Pentagon believed that keeping an operation off the books eliminated the need to give a formal briefing to the relevant members of Congress and congressional intelligence committees, whose jurisdiction is limited, in their view, to officially sanctioned C.I.A. operations. (The Pentagon is known to be running clandestine operations today in North Africa and Central Asia with little or no official C.I.A. involvement.)

"The Administration wouldn't take the chance of doing it within the system," the former senior intelligence official said. "The genius of the operation lies in the behind-the-scenes operatives—we have hired hands that deal with this." He added that a number of military and intelligence officials were angered by the covert plans. Their feeling was "How could we take such a risk, when we didn't have to? The Shiites were going to win the election anyway."

In my reporting for this story, one theme that emerged was the Bush Administration's increasing tendency to turn to off-the-books covert actions to accomplish its goals. This allowed the Administration to avoid the kind of stumbling blocks it encountered in the debate about how to handle the elections: bureaucratic infighting, congressional second-guessing, complaints from outsiders.

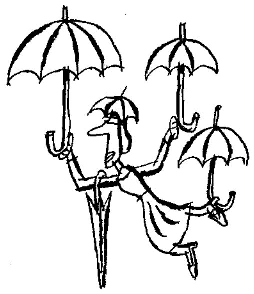
The methods and the scope of the covert effort have been hard to discern. The current and former military and intelligence officials who spoke to me about the election operation were unable, or unwilling, to give precise details about who did what and where on Election Day. These sources said they heard reports of voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, bribery, and the falsification of returns, but the circumstances, and the extent of direct American involvement, could not be confirmed.

And, as Larry Diamond noted, there was also a strong possibility that Iraqis themselves would attempt voter fraud, with or without assistance from the U.S. According to the government consultant with close ties to Pentagon civilians, the C.P.A. accepted the reality of voter fraud on the part of the Kurds, whom the Americans viewed as "the only blocking group against the Shiites' running wild." He said, "People thought that by looking the other way as Kurds voted—man and wife, two times—you'd provide the Kurds with an incentive to remain in a federation." (Kurdistan had gained partial autonomy before Saddam Hussein's overthrow, and many Kurds were agitating for secession.)

The high-ranking United Nations official told me, "The American Embassy's aim was to make sure that Allawi remained as Prime Minister, and they tried to do it through manipulation of the system." But he also said that there was cheating on the other side. "The Shiites rigged the election in the south as much as ballots were rigged for Allawi." He added, "You are right that it was rigged, but you did not rig it well enough."

Several weeks before the election, Margaret McDonagh, a political operative close to Tony Blair, showed up at Allawi's side in Baghdad, and immediately got involved in a last-minute barrage of campaigning, advertising, and spending. (McDonagh did not respond to a request for comment.) These efforts, and Allawi's own attempt to present himself as a forceful Prime Minister, apparently helped to raise his standing. In one American poll, he came close to nine per cent in the days before the election.

A second senior U.N. official, who was also involved in the Iraqi election, told me that for months before the election he warned the C.P.A. and his superiors that the voting as it was planned would not meet U.N. standards. The lack of security meant that candidates were unwilling to campaign openly, as in a normal election, for fear of becoming targets. Candidates ran as members of party lists, but the parties kept most of the names on their lists secret during the campaign, so voters did not even know who was running. The electorate was left, in most cases, with little basis for a decision beyond ethnic and religious ties. The United Nations official said, "The election was not an election but a referendum on ethnic and religious identity. For the Kurds, voting was about self-determination. For the Shiites, voting was about a fatwa issued by Sistani."



Some of the Americans working with the Administration on Iraq assumed that, once the Presidential election was over, Bush would delay the vote until security improved and more Sunnis could be brought in. In a *Times* Op-Ed piece published in late September, Noah Feldman, a consultant on constitutional issues for the C.P.A., warned that "without Sunni participation, the election results would be worse than useless. . . . Nobody expects perfection, but trying to rush ahead to democracy will increase the chances that we will never get there at all."

Feldman, who teaches at New York University Law School, told me that the Administration rejected this advice. "The neocons were true believers," Feldman said, referring to the senior civilian leadership in the Pentagon, "and they focussed on building an Iraq with no ethnicity and religion. They didn't realize that the President believes what you tell him"—that the election would diminish sectarian strife.

On Election Day, the weaknesses of the system and the potential for abuse were evident. The lack of security, which has severely restricted the ability of reporters to travel in Iraq, caused many international organizations that normally monitor elections to stay away. The European Union declined to send a delegation. An election expert who was in Iraq told me that he knew of only two international observers in the country on Election Day, one of whom was in the Green Zone. Most observers were Iraqis who had recently been trained by the American N.G.O.s or were affiliated with political parties.

The government consultant said that while the N.G.O.s had deployed most of the poll watchers to Shiite and Kurdish areas, fraud on Allawi's behalf took place in the Sunni areas. He added, "You never have enough observers in any election, and so how do you maximize their effectiveness? You never announce in advance where they're going. But in Iraq the people on the inside tipped them off," referring to the Iraqis and American operatives who were involved in manipulating the election. "They knew where the observers would and would not go."

One of the most scrutinized areas was in and around the ethnically mixed city of Mosul, in Nineveh Province. The election expert depicted the situation there as chaotic. Ballot boxes from four hundred and fifty polling stations flooded into a regional center that had been set up at the last minute because of security concerns. Many boxes had apparently been filled with bundles of ballots, "nicely arranged," before they were sealed, he said. Some ballots were simply dropped off in cardboard boxes. The process was marked by questionable counting and sloppy recordkeeping. It was, he said, "woefully inadequate."

An after-action assessment from Mosul forwarded to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (I.E.C.I.) concluded that approximately forty per cent of the ballots in the Mosul area could not "be allocated to a specific polling station"—in other words, it was not possible to determine which station they had come from. The report estimated that at least ten per cent of the hundreds of ballot boxes had been stuffed.

Two American election officials who were in Iraq acknowledged that there were problems but said that, at least in areas where observers were present, they were able to prevent many disputed ballots from being counted. An American who served as an adviser to the I.E.C.I. told me that he knew of three hundred questionable boxes from Mosul that "were excluded—never counted." There was cause for concern, both agreed, in the areas where, for security reasons, many observers could not be sent, especially in the Sunni regions.

Farid Ayar, a spokesman for the I.E.C.I., said, "I can assure you that neither the U.S. nor any other foreign nation intervened in our pure and honest election. I know of no such allegations." When asked about fraud by domestic parties, he added, "You can't check that. Maybe in a village somewhere somebody gave someone fifty dollars to vote for a candidate. It happens in most of the Third World countries. You don't know—maybe it happens, maybe not."

In retrospect, Les Campbell, of the N.D.I., told me, "we're really proud of what we did. In the end, the election was administered as well as it could have been, and the Iraqi citizens became convinced that there was a reason to vote. Yes, there were problems, but engaging in the democratic process is important." He added, "We did our best, and we don't know if anything that happened would have had a substantial effect on the election."

The final election totals were announced twelve days after the voting, and they contained some surprises and anomalies. The pro-Iranian Shiites did worse than anticipated, with forty-eight per cent of the vote—giving them far less than the two-thirds of the assembly seats needed to form a government and thus control the writing of the constitution. Allawi's slate did well, at least compared with his standing in earlier polls, gathering nearly fourteen per cent. The Kurds won twenty-six per cent of the vote. They had undoubtedly benefitted from a large, coördinated, and legitimate turnout. But the Turkmen and the Arabs, two minority groups in Kurdistan, held public protests accusing the I.E.C.I. of mismanagement and fraud, and demanded new elections.

Ghassan Atiyyah, a secular Shiite who worked on the State Department's postwar planning project before the invasion of Iraq and is now the director of the Iraq Foundation for Development and Democracy, in Baghdad, told me that he and many of his associates believed that Allawi's surprisingly strong showing "was due to American manipulation of the election. There's no doubt about it. The Americans, directly or indirectly, spent millions on Allawi." Atiyyah went on, "As an Iraqi who supported the use of force to overthrow Saddam, I can tell you that as long as real democratic practices are not adhered to, you Americans cannot talk about democracy."

On Election Day, voters had been handed ballots for the national assembly and for the provincial councils. Allawi's slate ran provincial lists in only eight provinces and received a total of 177,678 provincial votes in those areas. In the same provinces, Allawi's national list received a total of 452,629 votes—almost three times the number of provincial votes.

Most election experts I spoke to found the deviation surprising and difficult to explain. The State Department official, however, said that Allawi "had no organized campaign in the provinces, and the people he was running with locally had no appeal." The official then raised questions about possible irregularities in the Shiite vote. "Opinion polls consistently showed that Dawa candidates were beating the SCIRI party by two to one," he said. "In the actual election, in some provinces SCIRI beat Dawa two to one." Allawi's results, he said, "may not be a unique skewing—SCIRI may have done it, too."

A few weeks after the election, a European intelligence official, having acknowledged that he had heard allegations of voter fraud, told me, "The question will be: How will the elections be perceived in Iraq? As legitimate and fair? Or not?"

The election results made it necessary for the parties to form a coalition, as the Bush Administration had anticipated, and the U.S. initially lobbied for a major political role for Allawi. But Allawi, who had continued to serve as the acting Prime Minister, got no post when the new Iraq government was formed, in late April—demonstrating anew the limits of America's ability to control events in Iraq. Ibrahim al-Jafaari, of the Dawa party, became Prime Minister, and a Kurd, Jalal Talabani, became President.

In recent weeks, the Shiite and Kurdish leadership has agreed to put more Sunnis on the commission that is writing the constitution. The Shiite community is likely to limit their influence. Still, some observers, such as Noah Feldman, believe that the Sunnis on the commission "are going to try very hard to bring on board the serious players who can speak for the Sunni side of the insurgency"—beginning a process that could lead to stability in Iraq.

If this takes place, the election may still be judged a success. But what the Administration accomplished in its interventions is questionable. The efforts to reduce the Shiites' plurality, if they had any effect, only delayed their formation of a government, contributing to the instability and disillusionment that have benefitted the insurgency in recent months. The election outcome also strengthened the political hand of the Kurds, who have demanded more autonomy and refused to disband their powerful militias.

In early July, Jafaari stunned Washington by signing an extensive pact with Iran—a nation that President Bush named as part of an axis of evil. The deal reportedly included a billion dollars in military and reconstruction aid. At a joint press conference in Tehran, Ali Shamkhani, the Iranian Defense Minister, said, "It's a new chapter in our relations with Iraq." ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE TERRORISM BEAT

How is the N.Y.P.D. defending the city?

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

They meet every morning: Raymond W. Kelly, New York City's Police Commissioner; David Cohen, the Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence; and Michael Sheehan, the Deputy Commissioner for Counter Terrorism. At these sessions, held at One Police Plaza, in a room known as the executive command center, Kelly is briefed on overnight developments related to terrorism. One morning, I was allowed to sit in.

"Suicide bombing in Pakistan," Cohen said. "Details." He slid a sheet of paper to Kelly. "I put Hercules out on three Shiite mosques for the day."

Hercules is a set of police antiterror teams. The team members carry heavy weapons, and they turn up without warning at sites all over the city, for reasons never shared with the public.

"New al-Zawahiri video, went up last night on Al Jazeera. Mentions the U.S."

Kelly nodded, studying the report on the mosque deployments.

"Morty's back from Moscow," Cohen went on. "His report's worth your browsing."

Morty is Mordecai Dzikansky, a New York City homicide detective, currently stationed near Tel Aviv. (The N.Y.P.D. also has officers based, these strange days, in Singapore, Britain, Canada, and France.) He went to Russia to learn what he could from the school massacre at Beslan, in September, 2004. Dzikansky told me, when we met, that he'd been on the scene of thirteen suicide bombings in Israel, and that he learns something every time. Dzikansky is fast. He was in Istanbul within hours of the bombings of the city's synagogues in November of 2003. Four other New York City detectives were on a 9 A.M. flight to London after the morning rush-hour blasts there earlier this month.

Cohen said, "On Chechnya, Commissioner, we got this from Boston." He handed Kelly a document, saying something I couldn't decipher about Russian investors. (The ground rules of my presence precluded questions.)

News broadcasts from stations around the globe, including Al Jazeera, were playing silently on monitors in the room, along with live videocasts of traffic on New York's streets and highways. A big precinct map of the city hung on the wall next to an illuminated map of the world. The executive command center contains one long table, with a bank of serious-looking telephones—secure lines, satellite phones—built into it.

Kelly brought up Semtex, a Czech plastic explosive known as "the poor man's C-4." He wanted to know whether it was ever used in construction.

"It's military grade," Sheehan said evenly. Sheehan, who is fifty, sharp-featured, and wiry, spent twenty years in the Army, mainly in Special Forces; he later served as the State Department's Ambassador-at-Large for Counter Terrorism in the Clinton Administration. Kelly, who is sixty-three, was a marine and, even in a dark, double-breasted suit, still carries himself like a soldier on active duty. Presumably, both men know something about explosives.

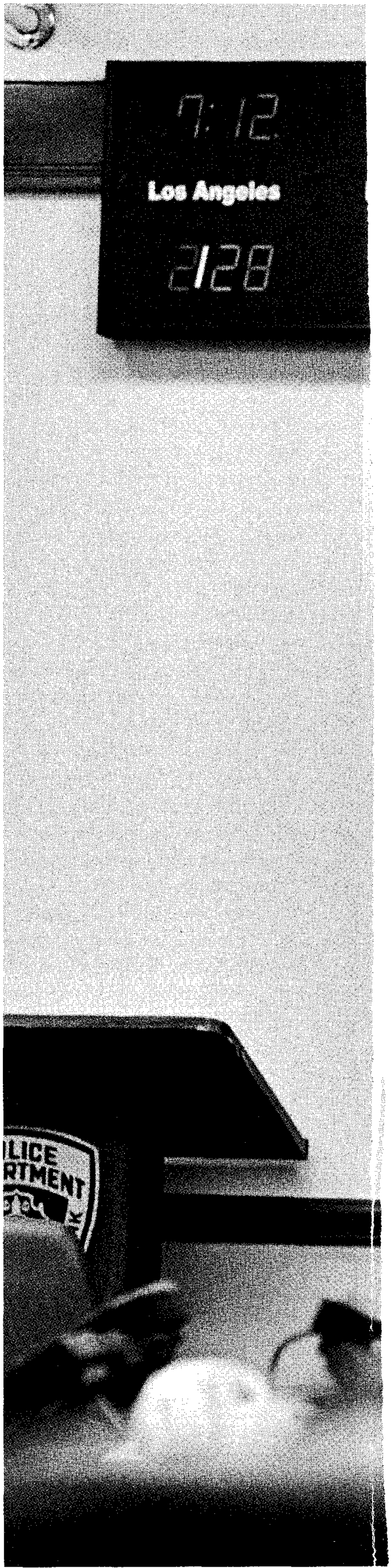
"Let's add it to Nexus," Kelly told Cohen, who made a note.

Nexus is another police antiterror program, run by the intelligence division. Nexus keeps tabs on terror-sensitive businesses and merchandise, among other things.

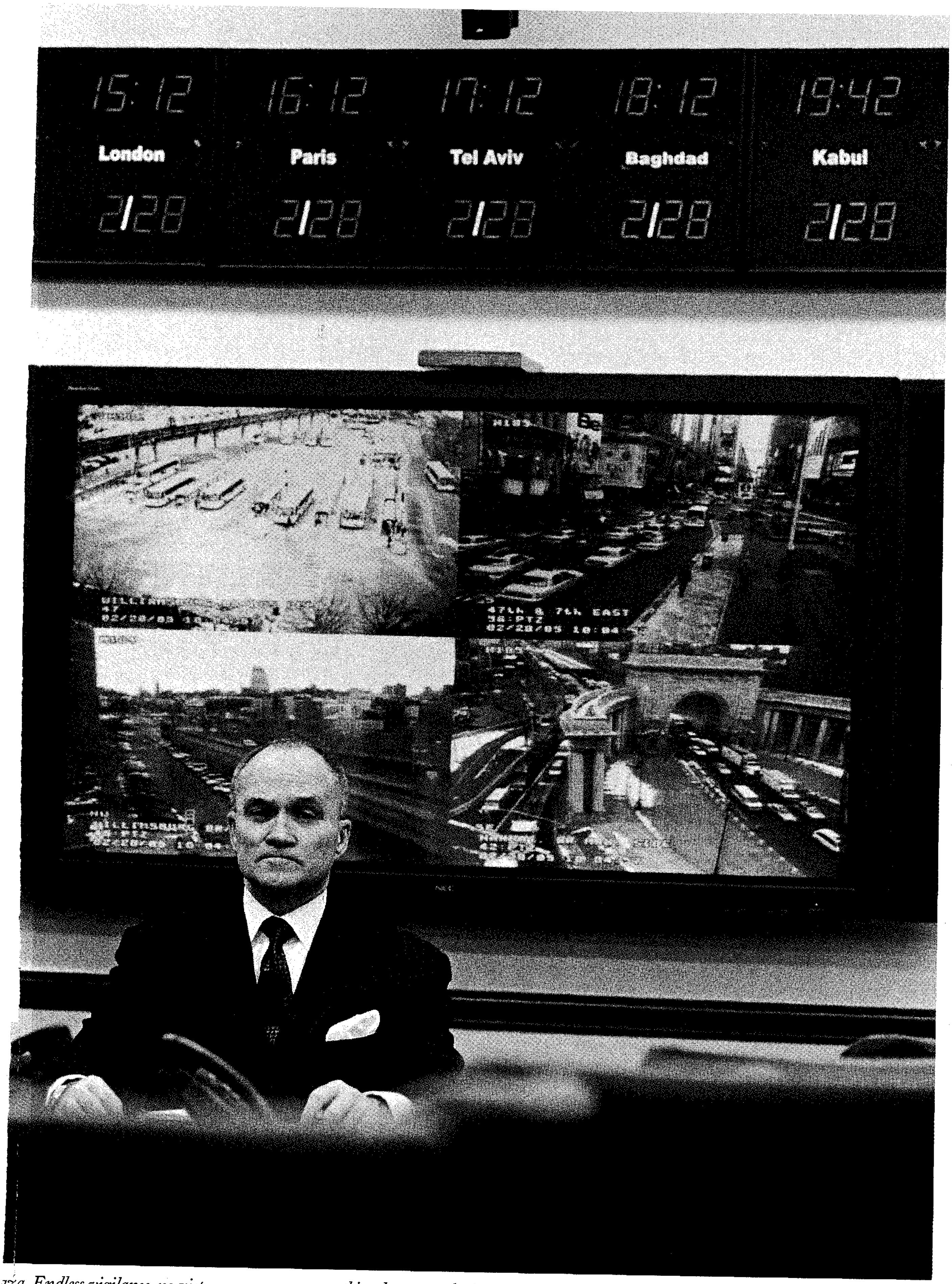
An aide called Kelly out of the room. Sheehan and Cohen relaxed perceptibly. They discussed a recent bombing in a Moscow subway station. "She knew she was a suicide bomb?" Sheehan asked.

"Oh, yeah," Cohen, who is sixty-three, said. "She was going the route. Cops spooked her."

Subways and their vulnerabilities have been an abiding preoccupation with these men since long before the bombing of the London Underground. Some of their other major worries include, in no partic-



Police Commissioner Ray Kelly at One P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za. Endless vigilance, no victory; success means nothing happens. Anti-drama is the essence of prevention. Photograph by Eugene Richards.

“I have pictures of him in his underwear.”

ular order, trucks, planes, helicopters, ferries, vans, tunnels, bridges, underground garages, high-rise buildings, the war in Iraq, the war in Chechnya, Al Qaeda, Indonesia, the Philippines, North Africa, East Africa, anthrax, nerve gas, ammonium nitrate, chemical plants, nuclear reactors, shipping containers, railroads, all large gatherings in New York City, and propane. “Worry,” I’ve noticed, is the hardest-working word in their collective vocabulary. “Another thing we need to worry about . . .” “My biggest worry is . . .” “Should we be worried about X?” “Hell, yes.”

Cohen, especially, has the pensive cast of a professional worrier. He spent thirty-five years in the C.I.A., rising to become director of operations. Kelly hired him in 2002 to revamp the Police Department’s intelligence division. There is no other program in the country even slightly like it now.

Kelly came back in. The briefing turned to local matters. “I.D. fraud in Queens,” Cohen said. (Document fraud is permanently high on the antiterror worry list.) “Two hundred arrests so far. I think there are another two hundred to be made. We flipped some people, but it’s very labor intensive. My advice: give them some more room on this. They’re all felony arrests.”

They moved on. Sheehan said, “Our four guys are back from Sweden. They found downloaded postcard photos of the Brooklyn Bridge.” At the mention of the Brooklyn Bridge, all jaws tightened.

“Anything back on al-Hindi?” Kelly asked Sheehan.

Abu Issa al-Hindi is an Al Qaeda operative, currently in British custody. Al-Hindi and his team were discovered, through a computer seized last summer in Pakistan, to have conducted extremely thorough surveillance on two large Manhattan buildings, including the Stock Exchange, and sites in Washington, D.C., and New Jersey. Because the surveillance seemed to date from before September, 2001, the press soon lost interest in the story. The N.Y.P.D. has not lost interest.

Sheehan said, “We’ve got a detective working it every day. Everything they touched here in New York, everybody they talked to. But they were very tightly packed, very discreet, like Mohamed Atta”—the September 11th hijacker.

“Did you check out the building I told you about?”

“Yeah.”

On a notepad, Sheehan started sketching what seemed to be a warehouse in Brooklyn. He and Kelly studied the drawing, filling in details, working out surveillance angles.

Kelly asked, “Hey, did you see what they did out front of Le Cirque? Two big brick boulders.”

“Le Cirque’s a little above my pay grade,” Sheehan said. “But I don’t think that’s authorized. I’ll drive by.”

“Listen,” Kelly said. “Tomorrow, remind them that it may be bigger than a shoebox.”

“Yeah, yeah, I will.”

Kelly was referring to a big training drill in the harbor that was to take place the next day. The police, along with the Fire Department and other agencies, would simulate a jet crash in the water off the end of a runway at LaGuardia, with the cause of the crash unknown.

Cohen mentioned a request from the C.I.A. His old employer wanted to borrow some N.Y.P.D. cyberintelligence specialists to help its people learn how to navigate jihadist chat rooms.

“Wait,” Kelly said, raising his hand. “My son.” He pointed to a monitor, where Greg Kelly, a correspondent for Fox News, was doing a standup. Kelly flicked on the sound. It was the Zawahiri video story. On the scroll across the bottom of the screen, the national terror-threat level appeared: yellow, “elevated.” Kelly flicked off the sound.

“O.K.,” he said. “C.I.A. wants what?”

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Under Ray Kelly’s command, the New York City Police Department has been profoundly reorganized since the terror attacks of 2001. Before the attacks, there were fewer than two dozen officers working the terrorism beat full time. Today, there are about a thousand. In some key areas, such as languages that are critical to counterterror work, the N.Y.P.D., drawing on a city of immigrants, has deeper resources than the federal agencies traditionally responsible for fighting international terrorism. Beyond the officers (and civilian analysts) working on terrorism exclusively, the department, which employs nearly fifty thousand people, has been comprehensively persuaded—through intensive new training, new equipment, new protocols—to think of counterterrorism as a fundamental part of what cops still call the Job.

The rationale for the N.Y.P.D.'s transformation after September 11th had two distinct facets. On the one hand, expanding its mission to include terrorism prevention made obvious sense. On the other, there was a strong feeling that federal agencies had let down New York City, and that the city should no longer count on the Feds for its protection. Some of Kelly's initiatives were incursions into territory normally occupied by the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. And yet few objections were raised. It was as if the Feds, reeling from September 11th, silently acknowledged New York's right to take extraordinary defensive measures. (Or, as one senior police official said to me, "Do you think anybody in Washington has the balls to tell Ray Kelly he can't do something he decides to do?")

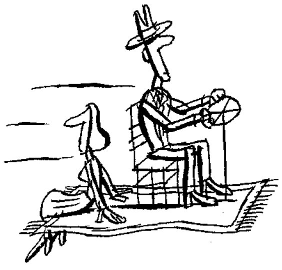
Within the counterterrorism world, the department's transformation is highly regarded. "The N.Y.P.D. is really cutting-edge," Brian Michael Jenkins, a senior adviser at the RAND corporation and a respected authority on terrorism, told me. "They're developing best practices here that should be emulated across the country. The Feds could learn from them." The federal government must, of course, play the leading role in stopping international terrorism at the borders. But, Jenkins said, "As this thing metastasizes, cops are it. We're going to win this at the local level."

This is Kelly's second tour as Commissioner; his first was in the early nineties, under David Dinkins. In his first week back, in January, 2002, Kelly announced the creation of a counterterrorism bureau—the first new bureau at the N.Y.P.D. in more than thirty years. He started a talent search that took him far outside traditional police-recruitment channels. Kelly wanted people with military, intelligence, and diplomatic backgrounds, with deep knowledge of international terrorist organizations—people like Cohen and Sheehan.

Kelly has been sharply critical of the Bush Administration's failure since September 11th to help New York protect itself. When I saw him at his office, where he sits at the desk that Theodore Roosevelt used when he was Commissioner, I asked him if the Administration had begun to do more. "We've seen some improvement," he said. "But it's not nearly what it should be, in my judgment. We're still defending the city pretty much on our dime." He glanced out the window at downtown Manhattan. "We're defending the nation here," he said. "These are national assets."

Communication, at least, is better than it was. Kelly talked about a brief but terrible scare, in October, 2001, when the White House was informed by the C.I.A. that a ten-kiloton nuclear weapon was being smuggled into New York City. The C.I.A.'s source for the story was eventually discredited. But what seemed to stick in Kelly's mind about the episode, which electrified the White House for several weeks, was that Rudolph Giuliani, who was then the mayor, was not told of the threat. "That would never happen now," Kelly said. "Nobody would dare sit on that kind of information today."

Ray Kelly came up the long way. He went from police cadet to Commissioner—the only officer in the history of the N.Y.P.D. to have done so. He was raised on the Upper West Side, the youngest child in a big, working-class Catholic family. His father started out as a milkman and ended up as a clerk at the Internal Revenue Service. Kelly, while working his way through Manhattan College toward a degree in business administration, took a job on the switchboard at Police Headquarters.



"It was the main number, and you had to memorize twelve hundred extensions," he says. "You just felt, working there, like you were right at the heart of the city." Kelly enrolled in a police-cadet program for college students. After graduation, he enlisted in the Marines and was sent to Vietnam. Before he left, he married Veronica Clarke, his high-school sweetheart. Their first child, James, was born while Kelly was overseas. (Greg was born two years later.)

Kelly rarely talks about his experience in Vietnam, and when I asked about it he used words like "frightening," "depressing," "debilitating." He passed through Khe Sanh and Hue, but spent most of his time in the jungles and fields of the central highlands, serving, initially, as a forward artillery observer, one of the more dangerous combat posts.

Kelly's early years as a police officer, in the late sixties, coincided with an epochal increase in violent crime. He became known as a "collar guy"—the type of cop who, given a choice, likes to make arrests, never mind the extra danger, paperwork, and court appearances they entail. Kelly has held twenty-five commands, and when I asked him which he liked most he talked about his days as a plainclothes officer in the old Twenty-third Precinct, in Manhattan, when it ran from East Eighty-sixth Street to East 110th Street. "Following people, jumping in cabs, keeping radios in whiskey bags," he said. "We arrested a lot of people."

Kelly went to law school at night, and got a master's in public administration from the Kennedy School, at Harvard. In 1985, officers in the 106th Precinct, in Queens, were accused of torturing suspects with stun guns. "The department sent Kelly to clean it up," Joe Calderone, who covered the story for New York *Newsday*, told me. "I'll never forget when he arrived at the precinct. A couple of us were there, and here comes this guy down the block. It was, like, uh-oh—here come the Marines. He carried an attaché case, not a hair or anything even slightly out of place. He was just all business. You could tell they'd sent in the A team."

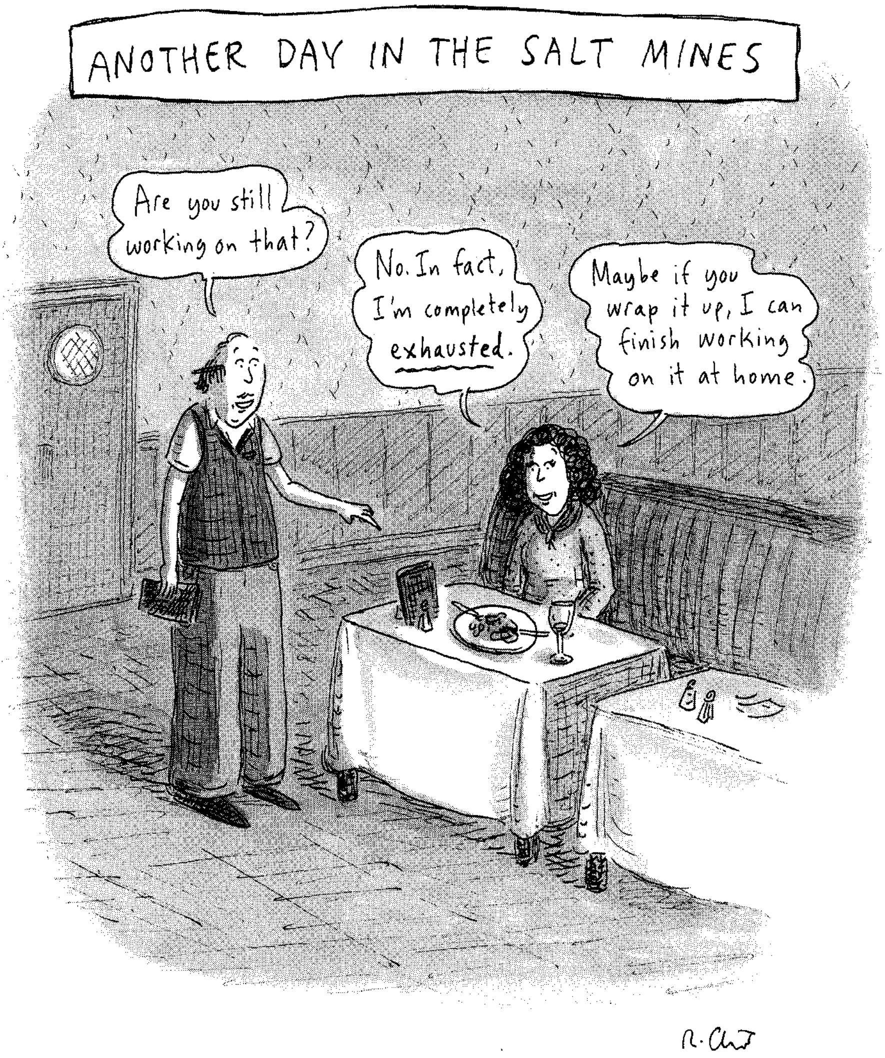
Kelly is a strange kind of tough guy, though. His sense of urgency, his impatience with the Feds, seem balanced by a certain laconic calm. He has a blunt, nineteenth-century face, complete with crooked smile. (Or, if he's angry, a perfect downturned circumflex of a mouth.) He wears his hair shorter than Sluggo's. He is extremely fit, lifting weights five days a week in a regimen that his wife describes as "borderline addictive." Still, there is no sense of gratuitous threat about him. He's neither tall nor burly, and he moves precisely, economically. Kelly listens hard and catches jokes early, but he doesn't have the verbal deftness of, say, a politician. He bites off sentences, or lets them trail toward the obvious point, as if to minimize the drama of what he's saying. It's a great affect for crisis management but not for winding up a crowd from a podium. His enthusiasms are wide-ranging: he relaxes by reading history, and by playing the drums.

Kelly became Commissioner in 1992, after Lee Brown was undone by officer corruption scandals and the Crown Heights riots. He improved morale and, more important, brought down the crime rate—finally reversing a long-term trend. But Giuliani was elected mayor the next year and decided to overhaul the police department. He replaced Kelly with William Bratton, who served as Commissioner for a little more than two years before Giuliani pushed him out. Bratton was innovative, flashy, and spectacularly successful at crime reduction. His achievement eclipsed Kelly's in the public's memory.

Kelly went on to serve in the Clinton Administration as an under-secretary of the Treasury, responsible for, among other agencies, the Customs Service, the Secret Service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. He commanded the multinational police force in Haiti in 1994. In the late nineties, he was Interpol's vice-president for the Americas. On September 11th, however, he was working, for the first time, in the private sector—as the director of global security at Bear, Stearns.

"I was out of it, out of the game," he told me. He and Veronica live in Battery Park City, across from Ground Zero. "The World Trade Center was really our community," he said. "Our bank was there, our drugstore. If you were going to the subway, you'd go through the World Trade Center." Veronica was out of the city when the towers fell. Kelly was at his office, in midtown. Their building was evacuated, and they weren't able to return for weeks. When they did, they went up on the roof. Veronica wept quietly. "This totally devastated—gone, you know—this huge hole, and it was still smoking," Kelly said. He felt maddeningly confined to the sidelines of the city's struggle to respond. But his chance came, unexpectedly, a few weeks later. Michael Bloomberg was elected mayor and immediately offered Kelly the Commissioner's job.

"He had a unique combination," Bloomberg told me. "He knew how to run a police department day in, day out—putting a cop at that corner, with this kind of backup, and that kind of training, and this kind of equipment. But he also had international and Washington experience, which are very different, and both very important. We need Washington for information, for funding. But we also need to have relations with security services and police departments around the world directly, not going through Washington. By luck of the draw, I knew somebody who had all three."


ANOTHER DAY IN THE SALT MINES
Are you still working on that?
No. In fact, I'm completely exhausted.
Maybe if you wrap it up, I can finish working on it at home.
R. Chast

The office of the department's Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence, where I spoke with David Cohen, is in an unlikely, distinctly hip corner of southern Manhattan. Roughly a hundred plainclothes cops were busy in the loft-style space outside Cohen's door, as they are around the clock. Cohen is ruddy-faced, with a piercing Boston accent. He said that he didn't have time to talk, but he did anyway, and at a rapid pace. "This threat is not going to go away," he said. "So we can't relax. If we do, that will produce the seam they'll go through."

Before September 11th, the intelligence division was devoted mostly to guarding visiting dignitaries. Cohen estimates that two per cent of its work was counterterrorism. Now that figure is eighty per cent. The division runs Nexus, cyberintelligence, overseas deployments, financial investigations, and all manner of undercover operations. It also still guards dignitaries.

Cohen already knew something about setting up a counterterrorism program. In 1996, he established a special team at the C.I.A., known as "the Bin Laden unit," that concentrated on Al Qaeda's finances. Kelly first got to know him in the late nineties, when Cohen was the C.I.A.'s station chief in New York. When he called Cohen for the N.Y.P.D. job, Cohen had already left the agency, and was doing global risk assessment at the insurance company A.I.G. Kelly persuaded him to take a huge pay cut and return to public service.

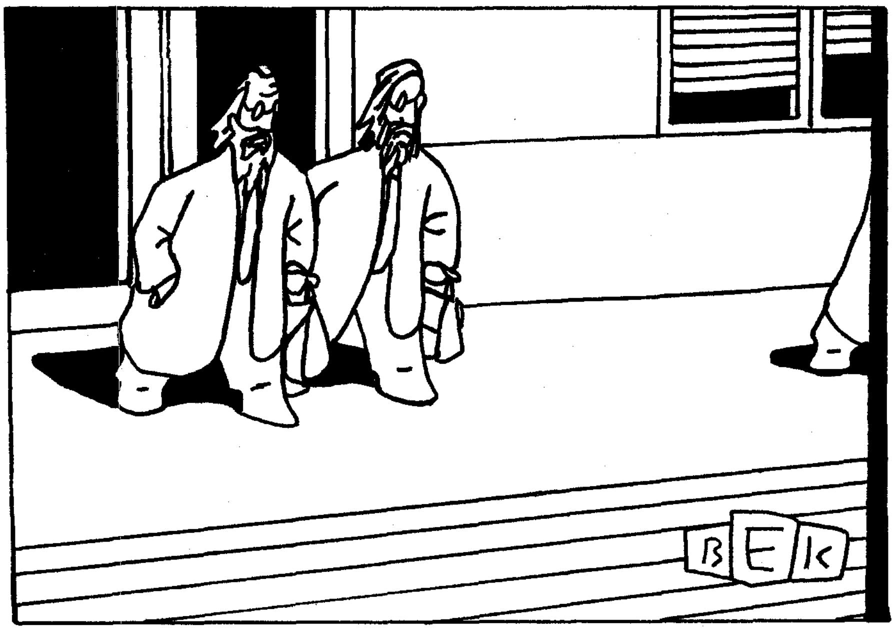
After a career in federal government, Cohen found that he liked the speed at which things can happen in the N.Y.P.D. The first time he and Kelly talked about stationing officers overseas, Cohen thought it was an exciting idea. At a meeting the following week, he brought it up again. Kelly cut him off, saying, "Didn't we already decide that?"

"The N.Y.P.D. is on a hair trigger," Cohen said. "The air gap between information and action is the shortest I've ever experienced." For example, he said, "Israeli border guards catch a guy who says he's trained to do surveillance for possible assassination operations in North America. That goes to Morty, and we're on it that day. This is about a week before we learn about it from other agencies."

Cohen went on, "Manila ferryboat explosion, hundred dead. Reported as industrial accident. Then they picked up a guy who said it was an Abu Sayyaf job." Abu Sayyaf is an Islamist guerrilla army in the Philippines, and an Al Qaeda ally. "We dispatched someone within the day. Any ferryboat incident anywhere, we want to know about it. It's not the F.B.I. or the C.I.A. or the Homeland Security Department down in the subway tunnels. It's the N.Y.P.D.

"We don't want to learn from what's happened here," he said. "We'd rather learn from what's happened somewhere else. We're looking at how they did it, the fine-grained stuff—what kind of detonators they used, what vehicles—so that we can take the anatomy of the operation and transpose it onto New York City and figure out what we can do."

Compared with what he did for the C.I.A., Cohen told me, "the work here is much less abstract. It's the difference between protecting U.S. national interests and protecting lives. This is concrete. It's the people, the city you see every day, the place where you live." Because of his years at the C.I.A., he added, he had security clearance that gave him access to information from the interrogations of prisoners held at Guantánamo Bay and elsewhere. N.Y.P.D. officers have also been directly involved in the arrests and interrogations of terror suspects in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Singapore. He didn't seem especially interested in the debate about how to treat terror detainees, and when I asked about the Patriot Act, which has been criticized by civil-rights groups, he said brusquely, "The Patriot Act helps the F.B.I. do its job. And that's good for us. I'm too busy to see if the F.B.I. abuses its powers." His mandate, he said, as set forth by Kelly, is "Do everything we possibly can within the bounds of the law to make sure there is not another terrorist attack on New York City. It ain't more complicated than that."



"I've been reading the trashiest scientific abstract."

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Luck plays a role. "Transit cops on the 7 train caught two guys camcording infrastructure," Cohen said. "Most of the video was tourist stuff. Two minutes was train track. Two minutes of train track? Turns out these guys worked for Iranian state intelligence. We turned them over to the F.B.I. They were deported ten days later."

He rubbed his eyes. "I don't know what we've stopped," he said. "It's impossible to calculate, and I don't spend much time thinking about it. I've gotta be thinking about the next thing."

Behind Cohen's desk stood a bin of large rolled maps of New York's neighborhoods, with handwritten tags attached: "Significant Concentrations of Pakistanis," "Significant Concentrations of Palestinians." A map of Iraq was pinned to the brick wall above the bin.

"Nothing from there yet," Cohen said. But the many N.Y.P.D. officers who have been to Iraq with the National Guard or with the Reserves are debriefed upon their return. Cohen turned and stared at the map. "I have to assume it's going to come out bad," he said.

One morning, I met Detective Charles Enright and his partner, Sergeant Joseph Salzone, at the Peninsula hotel, in midtown. Enright and Salzone work for Cohen on Operation Nexus, the program that tracks terror-sensitive businesses. Nexus squads visit about two hundred business concerns a week. Since the program was launched, in 2002, they've been to more than twenty thousand. Jimmy Chin, the Peninsula's regional director of risk management, was meeting with Enright and Salzone. The Nexus officers wore business suits, and had the intense but deferential air of high-end sales reps. Anyone writing a parking ticket would be more intimidating. They rely, essentially, on the public-spiritedness of businesspeople, whom they practically beg to alert them to anything suspicious.

Chin, who is also the chairman of the safety-and-security committee of the Hotel Association of New York City, said, "The N.Y.P.D. is a huge police department that acts like a small one. In other places I go, nobody can imagine the kind of tight relationship we have here. But we've really changed our thinking since 9/11. I wouldn't have given these guys my cell number before. Now they've got to be able to reach me 24/7."

"Most of these major hotels, they have garages, and that's what we're actually most worried about," Salzone said.

I asked what would be of interest to them. "People who don't want to give the garage the keys. Any vehicle that looks overloaded," he said.

"Salvage yards—they're traditionally Mob-related, so they get their guard up when we show up," Enright said. "But we tell them it's about terrorism, their guard comes down, they're ready to help. They know we don't want to look at their books. Other departments are going to bust their chops on that. We just want to know about any used emergency vehicles they've been selling."

"Ambulances," Salzone said. "Ambulances can get through checkpoints. In the Middle East, they've been filled with explosives. Boom."

"Pat Wagner manages the Thirty-fourth Street heliport, has a lot of Jet A fuel," Salzone said. "We talk to her a lot."

After a Palestinian suicide bomber in Israel disguised himself as an ultra-Orthodox Jew, the Nexus teams visited religious-garb suppliers. When, in early 2003, an alleged plot to poison the London Underground with ricin was reported, Enright and Salzone headed to Manhattan's diamond district, because acetone, which dealers use to process their stones, is used in the production of ricin. Castor beans are also required. To learn more about those, the Nexus teams visited horticulturalists and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. (David Cohen told me proudly, "It's been said, 'Cohen knows where every castor bean in the city is!' ")

"Thing you've got to remember," Salzone said. "We got a boss who doesn't sleep." He meant Cohen. "That percolates down to us."

"9/11 is never over," Enright said.

The officers wrapped up their business with Chin and left the Peninsula. A truck-rental place in Chelsea had a new manager they wanted to meet. She turned out to be a Trinidadian, young and friendly but very busy. She took business cards, murmuring "Terrorist Incident Prevention Unit" as she read, and eying Salzone and Enright. She took a Nexus information sheet, but was obviously eager to get back to work. Enright and Salzone headed for the door. Then the new manager said, "Wait. There *was* one fellow. A really strange guy."

"Did he pay cash?"

"Yes."

Enright and Salzone turned back. And so the manager told them a long story about a secretive, erratic, abusive customer. To me, he sounded extremely suspicious. I was riveted. Enright and Salzone were not. They thanked the manager for her time, and left.

Once we were back on the street, they gently explained to me that the man was just a bad truck-rental customer. Every truck-rental place had them. Yes, this guy had paid cash, but nothing else the manager said tripped any alarms. Then I realized why he had sounded so suspicious to me. Her manner, the sequence, even the rhythm of the conversation—"Wait, there *was* one fellow"—followed, to the letter, every script of every cop show ever made.

Enright seemed to read my mind. "All these duped-up cop cars they're using on these TV shows," he said. He was pointing along the West Side Highway. " 'Law & Order'—they shoot right over here. Those cars are all unsecured at night, so we visit them."

The intelligence division doesn't gather information only from the street. It has specialists tracking suspicious financial movements and others working the jails and prisons; in unmarked buildings throughout the boroughs, it has officers fluent in the relevant languages poring over the foreign press or surfing the innumerable jihadist Web sites and chat rooms. The N.Y.P.D. employment application form these days asks about knowledge of some sixty languages. The department has had considerably more success in attracting immigrants who can pass its careful background checks than either the F.B.I. or the C.I.A. has had. In a nation that, in 2002, conferred a total of six undergraduate degrees in Arabic, even the Pentagon, not known for its humility, recognizes this rare resource. The Department of Defense recently borrowed seventeen computer-literate Arabic speakers from the N.Y.P.D. to assist its intelligence arm. At one counterterrorism-bureau facility, in a darkened room full of cops wearing headphones and silently watching satellite broadcasts on big flat-screen TVs, I met a tall, gaunt officer, whom I'll call Mohamed, taking notes on news reports from Pakistan. Mohamed grew up south of Kabul, speaking Dari. He also understands Pashto, Farsi, and Arabic. He joined the N.Y.P.D. in 1994, and was issuing parking tickets when the counterterrorism bureau found him, in 2002.

On another occasion, David Cohen introduced me to some of the N.Y.P.D.'s cyberintelligence specialists: a detective and a sergeant, both born and reared in Egypt, and a detective born and reared in Iran. "When we started, in 2002, we didn't really know what we were doing," Reza, the Iranian-born officer, said. "It was trial and error. Viruses beyond belief. But we got the medicine now. We go into the worst chat rooms."

"We're always being tested," Maged, the detective from Egypt, said. "You know you passed the test when suddenly somebody gives you a password to a chat room you didn't know existed." He went on, "We're familiar with the tradition, the background, we speak the slang."

"Also, we're cops," Reza said. "We hear different things than the civilians the F.B.I. hires do. We got investigative backgrounds, looking for bad guys on the street. Sometimes it's not what they're saying, it's what they're not saying. You see patterns, like news items from two months before that suddenly start recirculating."

Sometimes, Reza said, "You'll see an offer of a video-clip download. It might be a beheading, or training materials, or proof that someone actually did something."

Aly, the Egyptian-born sergeant, shook his head. "This is not Islam," he said.

The cybercops told me that each of them belonged to more than thirty separate e-mail groups, or chat rooms.

"It can take a long time to work your way up the ladder," Maged said. "At first, it might be just some guy in Texas talking with some guy from Saudi, anti-government shit. But other people are listening, and if they see you coming back every day, and you seem serious, they might invite you somewhere else."

"Ninety-seven per cent of the juicy stuff is done P.M.—personal message," Reza said. "Not in chat rooms. But it takes a lot of time—months, maybe years—to get this kind of trust."

I asked the cybercops how they communicated with other security services.

"We tell the Commissioner," Reza said, indicating Cohen. "He tells the C.I.A."

"Or I call Kelly, depending what it is," Cohen said. "And he *takes* our calls."

Detective Ira Greenberg, the N.Y.P.D.'s man in Scotland Yard, was on the Tube, on his way to work, when the London bombs went off. As soon as he could reach the street, he started phoning in reports to the intelligence division. Kelly was awakened by a call at home. He ordered the entire department's midnight-to-eight shift to stay on duty through the day, and posted an officer in every subway train during rush hour. Four detectives—two from intel, two from counterterrorism—left for London. The N.Y.P.D.'s response was similar on the day of the Madrid train bombings, last year. Cohen told me, "I got a call"—from Washington—"saying, 'Don't send anybody.' I said, 'They're already on the plane.'" He went on, "They were the first foreign law enforcement on the scene with access. They were welcomed. They weren't over there investigating. That's someone else's job. We're just trying to understand, so as to increase protection here." After learning that the Madrid train bombers parked their van a few blocks from the station, and carried their bombs by hand to the trains, the department ordered that the security perimeter around subway and commuter-train stations in New York be expanded by two blocks. The revelation that a small businessman saw the Madrid terrorists' preparations but figured that it was just a petty crime in progress and didn't bother calling the cops was seen as a reason to redouble Nexus, so that no New York shop owner will ever be that blasé.

The London bombings reminded me of something Sheehan had said: "Your greatest fear is that they're out there below the horizon." Unlike the Madrid bombers, the young jihadists who killed more than fifty people this month were not, it seems, even on the radar of the local police. British security has disrupted a number of serious plots in recent years, but its intelligence failed utterly this time. As the I.R.A. once darkly observed, after

—J.J. SEMPÉ

STAN'S BAR
SMUG HOUR
5P.M.-6P.M.

a botched attempt to assassinate Margaret Thatcher, "We only have to be lucky once; you will have to be lucky always." Subway systems, moreover, are hugely vulnerable. Cohen's undercover agents spent more than a year tracking a young Pakistani immigrant named Shahwar Matin Siraj, who, according to the police, enlisted an angry teen-ager from Staten Island named James Elshafay in a plot to bomb the Thirty-fourth Street/Herald Square subway station. Investigators never found a connection between the pair and any organization, but, according to the police, Siraj and Elshafay drew up detailed attack plans. Cohen's informant was by then wearing a wire and, last August, the men were arrested. "Lone wolves," Cohen said. "Homegrown, but inspired globally."

What the N.Y.P.D. learns from London's tragedy will flow from the investigation now under way. In the subways, more closed-circuit cameras and more—not fewer—station attendants would seem to be indicated. Hasty reactions are not always helpful. On the day of the London blasts, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the Brooklyn Battery and Queens Midtown tunnels, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the Lincoln and Holland tunnels, disconnected cell-phone service in the tunnels, calling it a counterterror measure. The measure's logic was unclear. The *Post* quoted a Port Authority official as saying that the N.Y.P.D. had requested the cutoff. But an N.Y.P.D. spokesman told me, with some frustration, that the department had made no such request. Michael Sheehan, Kelly's counterterrorism deputy, was closely monitoring events in London—his and Cohen's officers are embedded in the investigation there—but he had not yet seen anything that would, he told me, "change how I deploy here." Public fears of a possible follow-up attack rose and fell—"FIENDS POISED TO STRIKE AGAIN," the *Post* opined—but Sheehan seemed calm. "We're on high alert," he said. "They're not going to attack you when you're on high alert."

"Our backbone is hard-nosed detective work, investigations," Sheehan told me. And yet there is not much about his job that resembles traditional police work. He worries about infrastructure protection—roadways, financial systems, the water supply. He works on grim, multi-agency protocols for identifying and responding to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (C.B.R.N.) attacks. He supervises constant, intensive training—his bureau trains city, state, federal, and regional instructors, and also key corporate security divisions. "We train the trainers," Sheehan says.

Sheehan, like Cohen, has been thinking hard about Al Qaeda for a long time. He was in Somalia in the early nineties, when Al Qaeda trained and supplied local militiamen who attacked American peacekeepers. By the time he retired from Special Forces, as a lieutenant colonel, in 1997—having completed two tours with the National Security Council, at the White House—Sheehan had developed what "The 9/11 Commission Report" describes as an "obsession with terrorism." He became the State Department's coördinator for counterterrorism in 1998, but was frustrated by the cautiousness of American efforts to oppose Al Qaeda. Sheehan told the 9/11 Commission that he felt he was regarded as "a one-note Johnny nutcase."

Richard Clarke, the N.S.C.'s coördinator for counterterrorism, in his book "Against All Enemies," describes Sheehan's fury after one White House meeting, in 2000: " 'What's it going to take, Dick?' Sheehan demanded. . . . 'Does Al Qaeda have to attack the Pentagon to get their attention?' "

Sheehan says that, even when he was at the State Department, he was often in New York. "Most of the real Al Qaeda expertise in this country was always here in New York," he told me. John O'Neill, of the F.B.I., was the head of the local Joint Terrorism Task Force then. O'Neill was as prescient about Al Qaeda as Sheehan and Clarke were, and at least as frustrated. O'Neill quit the F.B.I. in 2001, became security director of the World Trade Center, and a few weeks later was killed in the terror attacks.

So Sheehan took the counterterrorism job at the N.Y.P.D. with a full appreciation of the federal government's failings. Kelly knew Sheehan from his stint in Haiti, where Sheehan was the American liaison to the international forces. When Kelly approached him about the New York job, Sheehan was serving as the U.N.'s Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping. "He didn't have to talk me into it," Sheehan said. "I wanted to get back into counterterrorism."

What's striking about Sheehan is how casually he connects his unusual breadth of experience to his present job. He directs close studies of far-flung terrorist episodes and groups, on the theory that, as he put it, "We have to know what's going on. When things went to hell in Egypt in 1990, it showed up here." Among other things, he was referring to the fact that Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the leader of the foiled 1993 "landmarks" bomb plot against major New York buildings and tunnels, came to the United States in 1990, having escaped a brutal crackdown on Islamists.

As closely as Sheehan watches developments in Yemen and the Philippines, most of his work is profoundly local. It is basically civil defense, retooled for the age of terror. His conversation is full of "bomb curtains" (an Israeli invention, made of Kevlar—all vulnerable commercial windows should have them) and "clamshell" road barriers (also known as Delta barriers, a design refined by the N.Y.P.D.) and "standoff" (an area around targets, particularly buildings, not accessible to vehicles).

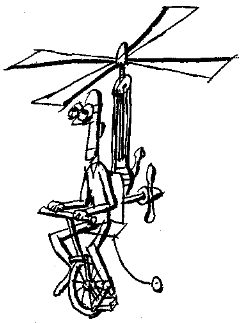
It was Sheehan who, in a letter to the Port Authority last year, raised the N.Y.P.D.'s concerns about the design of the Freedom Tower, at Ground Zero. The standoff was inadequate, Sheehan said, and there was too much glass near the ground. Kelly backed Sheehan, Mayor Bloomberg backed Kelly, and the plans for the site were eventually redrawn.

Sheehan stared ruefully at the papers on his desk, and pushed away the remains of a takeout lunch. He has a restless, loose-limbed energy; in a dark suit, carelessly worn, with his caustic asides and wide knowledge, he seems more like a professor than like a career soldier, or a top police official. "You've got to find a level of intensity you can sustain," he said quietly. "If we let ourselves get all spun up by every bullshit threat we get from Washington—and not sleep for three nights, then sleep for two days—something real will happen during those two days."

The threat reports from Washington were incessant, he said. "A lot of stuff originates overseas, probably from some jerkoff teen-ager. We get it from C.I.A., F.B.I., and I'm glad they pass it to us, but the first thing we ask is 'What's the source?' Our hot line, which gets a lot of calls, somebody answers and asks for a name and address. So we get very little b.s." (The hot-line number is 888-NYC-SAFE. It can also be reached through 311. All the signs in the subways and at bus stops—"If You See Something, Say Something"—point to the hot line.)

Sheehan, as an outsider to local institutions, seems to have a relatively easy time forming unheard-of alliances with other city agencies. He even claims to welcome the N.Y.P.D.'s traditional rivalry with the Fire Department. "They're both aggressive organizations, and that's fine," he said. In April, the Mayor signed a formal order designating the Police Department the lead agency in hazardous-materials incidents, which had previously been handled by the Fire Department with the police in a subordinate role—and the F.D.N.Y., naturally, objected. In other American cities, fire departments still have the command role in hazmat incidents. But New York City is at an exceptionally high risk for a C.B.R.N. attack, and that has caused the city to revise the traditional approach.

Assistant Chief Phil T. Pulaski, a commanding officer in the counterterrorism bureau, gave me an example: "A tanker-truck collision, a spill, it's an accident anywhere in the country, but not here in New York City. Our intel shows that Al Qaeda's instructions to its people are 'Get your hazmat license, get your tanker-truck license, and we will use them as weapons.' So any tanker spill here is presumed to be criminal in nature, and it's investigated as such until proved otherwise. Why? Because if the scene is just cleaned up as fast as possible, we may miss the evidence of a terror crime in progress. The driver may get away. Even if he's killed, we want to go through his pocket litter, find out who he's meeting. We want to prevent the next incident."



Much of the counterterrorism bureau's work is done at a facility in an obscure warehouse district in Coney Island. Like other nodes on the N.Y.P.D.'s antiterror grid, it has a slightly "X-Files" feel. There's no sign on the building; if you don't know where to look, you probably won't find it. Pass through the solidly built, monitored, and remote-controlled door, however, and you're in a bustling, gleaming, windowless, oddly cosmopolitan world. There are classrooms, meeting rooms, lots of cops (uniformed and plainclothes), a little cafeteria, a library. On one wall is a big framed black-and-white photograph—an aerial shot, taken at night—of the twin towers, looking intensely romantic.

"We collect information on the strategic threat, including from overseas, and analyze it," Captain Hugh O'Rourke told me. "Then we take it out and put it to work: target hardening."

We were joined by Lieutenant John Rowland, the director of regional training for the bureau. "We've been doing instruction on Islam for the N.Y.P.D.," Rowland said. "It's needed. We've got a lot of Catholics in this department." (I had already noted, in a restroom at the facility, a well-thumbed copy of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam.")

O'Rourke said, "We're trying to get our analysis influenced with the proper cultural perspective, because we're a long way from southwest Asia. Some of our officers were born there, though."

"Pashtun tribesmen, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Farsi-speakers, Filipinos, Chinese—you name it," Rowland said. "They've been tremendously helpful. One guy here just made his hajj."

The N.Y.P.D.'s contingency planning now includes the devolution of decision-making, in an emergency, from One Police Plaza to eight borough command posts around the city. This system got an unplanned tryout during the big summer power failure in 2003. It passed that test. I visited a facility known as the "shadow command center," which will replace N.Y.P.D. headquarters if One Police Plaza becomes disabled. It's in an even more obscure spot than the Coney Island center, and it sees very little telltale traffic in and out. Vast rooms full of desks, phones, and silent monitors stretched around us, inside a huge windowless warehouse. It's designed to be up and running in an hour.

I went out to Floyd Bennett Field, the old airbase on Jamaica Bay, to watch some N.Y.P.D. training exercises. There were "fast rope" helicopter maneuvers: officers zipped down ropes from choppers hovering thirty or forty feet above the ground; they hit the dirt, rolled, and sprinted to positions, under the beady eyes of trainers with stopwatches.

Charles Kammerdener, the commanding officer of the special-operations division, met me in his office. He was white-haired, almost naval-looking. "In the old days, it was basically a perp in a building in a tactical situation," he said. " 'Thank you. Do it over.' That was then. Nowadays, we train for people who may be military-trained, booby-trapped, automatic-armed, working multiply."

Sheehan talks about "adding a counterterrorism element to event management." Kammerdener gave me an example. "The marathon," he said. "While those runners are warming up and stretching on Staten Island, I have people moving through the crowd doing air monitoring. I have a helicopter up with a video downlink and snipers."

Outside the old airbase headquarters, there were subway cars parked in the scrub, swarming with guys in huge blue hooded suits—a simulated chemical attack. A mannequin representing a victim was rushed past me to a portable outdoor shower, where it was scrubbed with long-handled brushes while an instructor barked suggestions: "More water!" More blue suits were going through the train cars with monitors.

Dr. Dani-Margot Zavasky, an infectious-disease specialist with an interest, previously only academic, in unconventional weapons, is the medical director of the counterterrorism bureau. "Not only are bioagents hard to detect, they're hard to put yellow tape around," she said. "They're not like other crime scenes." Recently, she told me, "a number of us have been studying the issue of quarantine—what can be done, legally, in the United States. The N.Y.P.D. cannot order a quarantine, of course, but we can help enforce one. So we must prepare."

Phil Pulaski, from the counterterrorism bureau, told me that all officers had at least basic training in C.B.R.N. response, and some "have all the equipment—they can enter the hot zone." He added, "We'll work with the chief medical examiner, going through the bodies, in case they're suicide perps."

John Colgan, a deputy chief in the counterterrorism bureau, said, "We've got a seventeen-page protocol on C.B.R.N. / hazmat incidents. Officer Jones may need to know just one page, but he trains on the whole thing, so he knows where he fits in. He's seen the whole movie, that's good. But you really gotta know your lines."

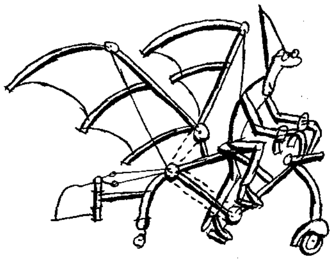
Before September 11th, the N.Y.P.D. had a small unit that, on request, reviewed the security arrangements of important businesses and facilities. "That was really just lights and locks," a counterterrorism officer told me. Now the unit offers much more comprehensive, terror-risk assessments, free of charge. The N.Y.P.D. sends the officers who carry out the assessments to labs around the country for radiological, biological, chemical, and bomb training.

Sheehan and one of his detectives took me through an assessment they had produced for a prominent Manhattan institution. The detective, flipping slowly through a volume of photographs of walls, doors, driveways, fences, chimneys, air vents, and columns, told me, "We look at both the facility and its potential adversaries. This particular institution might be targeted by computer hackers, or animal-rights activists."

The detective went on, "You see these columns here? No bomb-blast mitigation measures in place. Very easy for a truck to pull up right here, with this whole big structure up above. That's bad. They're hardening these columns as we speak."

Not all businesses are thrilled to receive a detailed, official tally of their "risk exposures," however. The alterations suggested are often expensive, and not all insurers agree that the liability implications of having such a list would be good for their clients if an attack occurred.

The No. 1 private-sector target in New York—perhaps the No. 1 target, period—is, according to many experts, Wall Street. I went to talk to James Esposito, the New York Stock Exchange's senior vice-president for security. Esposito is big, imposing, in his sixties. He was the top F.B.I. agent in New Jersey at the time of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. "These guys are just like smugglers," Esposito said. "They're always going to be trying to come up with something different. It's like a bad dream, and it won't go away."



" 'Groundhog Day,' " said his deputy, Sam Cocozza, who is ex-N.Y.P.D.

Wall Street has been closed to traffic at Broadway since the mid-nineties, and Broad Street and other blocks have been closed since September 11th. The result is an eerie, very un-Manhattan stillness. There are cops everywhere you look, including a full N.Y.P.D. Hercules team, with automatic weapons, armored trucks, and a K-9 unit. The cobbled streets are laced with iron fencing, heavy concrete planters, and huge steel bollards, anchored deep in the ground—a fixed defense against truck bombs. There are still plenty of tourists milling around, although the top attraction in the area, the Stock Exchange tour, has been shut down since September 11th. Indeed, it is believed that Issa al-Hindi's reconnaissance team used the tour to case its target.

"They had counted the chairs in the Big Board room," Esposito said sourly.

"We had sharpshooters, bomb dogs, drug dogs years ago," Esposito went on. "But, suddenly, it's so sophisticated. The N.Y.P.D. has created a body of experts that is just unbelievable. Without frightening the public, they've just been quietly going about their business. Our people have trained with the Police Department, the Fire Department, on C.B.R.N. We're really customers of their expertise."

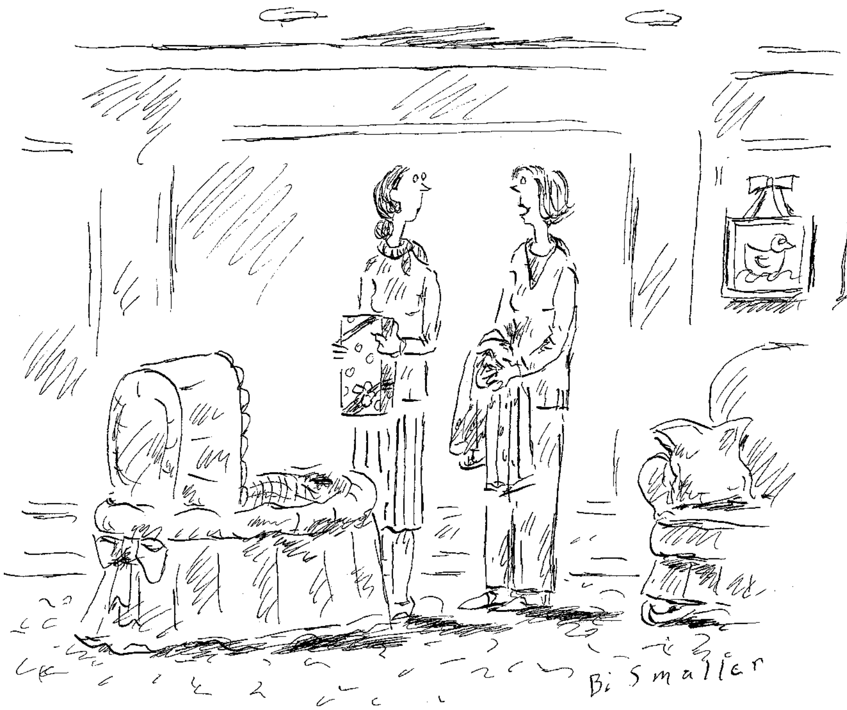
I was walking through a crowded shopping district downtown with a senior police official. We were on our way to one of the "undisclosed locations" of the metropolitan antiterror effort. The official said, "Now, guess who the Feds are." I saw two young white men in dark suits standing stiffly against a wall, failing utterly to blend into the scene.

A former federal prosecutor told me, "New York has never been a sought-after post among F.B.I. agents. That's partly the cost of living, and partly the ferocious competition with the N.Y.P.D. Detectives are just so much more experienced than young federal agents at interviewing suspects and sources. It's intimidating. F.B.I. agents parachute in. They don't know the city. They look like aliens to us, let alone to an immigrant community."

The N.Y.P.D. works closely with

the F.B.I. on counterterrorism, mainly through the local Joint Terrorism Task Force. (The task force worked on the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and apprehended the main perpetrators.) Tim Herlocker, the agent in charge of the local branch of the Bureau's new Office of Intelligence, told me that the N.Y.P.D. had "soldiers to invest in this at a level that we never will have." The N.Y.P.D., which is nearly twice the size of the F.B.I., "really stepped up," Herlocker said, after September 11th.

Still, the tensions persist. The F.B.I. reportedly opposed the deployment of Morty Dzikansky to Israel, for example. John Colgan, the deputy chief for counterterrorism, says, "We reach through the F.B.I. to get federal assets. But the Bureau's got to let us know what it's doing in our city. You can't have some guy you don't know coming into your house to cook hamburgers on your stove. You might blow him away. We've got to be kept informed, or there may be trouble."



"The baby's nice, but it's not the narcissistic rush I thought it would be."

Local police departments tend to resent the F.B.I.—if nothing else, for its tendency to condescend to them. Its agents actually have a better working relationship with the N.Y.P.D. than most, partly, no doubt, because the condescension runs both ways. The deep identity crises and public exposures of incompetence that have distracted and consumed the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. since September 11th may, paradoxically, have strengthened New York's counterterror efforts by allowing it to move into the vacuum and build an aggressive municipal self-defense.

Cohen told me, "We've got the Feds working for us now, in a good way; it's not the usual feeding of raw material to the experts." It's doubtful that anyone at the F.B.I. would put it quite the same way. When I mentioned Commissioner Kelly to Pasquale D'Amuro, then the F.B.I.'s lead agent in New York, he grew testy. "I don't tell Ray Kelly what to do," he said. "He doesn't tell me what to do." (D'Amuro recently left the F.B.I. and joined Giuliani Partners.)

Since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, in 2002, there has been one large, inert, misshapen bureaucracy that, for New York, at least, symbolizes the extent of the Bush Administration's neglect. When Kelly says that New York is having to defend itself "pretty much on our dime," he is referring, primarily, to the budgeting formula under which homeland-security funds are disbursed. In fiscal year 2004, Wyoming received $37.74 per capita, and North Dakota $30.82, while New York got $5.41. Among the fifty states, New York's per-capita allotment was forty-eighth. This bizarre formula is, from New York's point of view, only slowly improving.

The bill for New York City's antiterror budget, which is roughly two hundred million dollars a year, is footed, for the most part, by the city itself. Bloomberg's view has been, from the beginning, that Kelly should do whatever he considers necessary, and that a way to pay for it will be found later.

Kelly, in return, has given Bloomberg a rare political gift: crime rates that have continued to fall without an over-reliance on the kind of tactics that alienated minorities during the Giuliani administration. The fact that crime is so low has also made the department's ferocious new focus on terrorism possible. Kelly has sometimes infuriated the police unions by refusing to defend officers in controversial incidents. However, within the department, his dramatic restructuring of the Job has encountered surprisingly little resistance. He told me that was because police officers identified with the counterterrorism effort: "They see themselves on a mission to protect the city."

"*Salaam alaikum.*" Mayor Bloomberg was greeting an auditorium full of Muslim community leaders last fall at One Police Plaza. Ramadan was about to begin, and Bloomberg and Kelly had invited them for an annual pre-holiday conference. The gathering had been blessed by a diminutive imam from Indonesia, who sang a verse from the Koran.

Bloomberg extolled New York as "a city based on religious tolerance," and deplored bias crimes against Muslims (which have increased many-fold throughout the United States since September 11th). "The N.Y.P.D. is our first line of defense against hate and bias," he said. He wished his esteemed constituents a good Ramadan. "*Ma'assalama.*"

Kelly was crisp and specific. He said that he would be increasing patrols around mosques for the holiday, and would put out extra plainclothes officers. "We want recent immigrants in particular to know that the Police Department is not an immigration agency," he said. He added that he hoped that more Muslims would become police officers, and gave specifics—dates, phone numbers, Web sites—for applying to take the next police exam. He said he had no new threat information to report. "Still, we ask all New Yorkers to look at events through the prism of 9/11. If you see or hear anything suspicious, we urge you to call 311 and ask for the terrorism hot line." Then he, too, wished the crowd a good Ramadan.

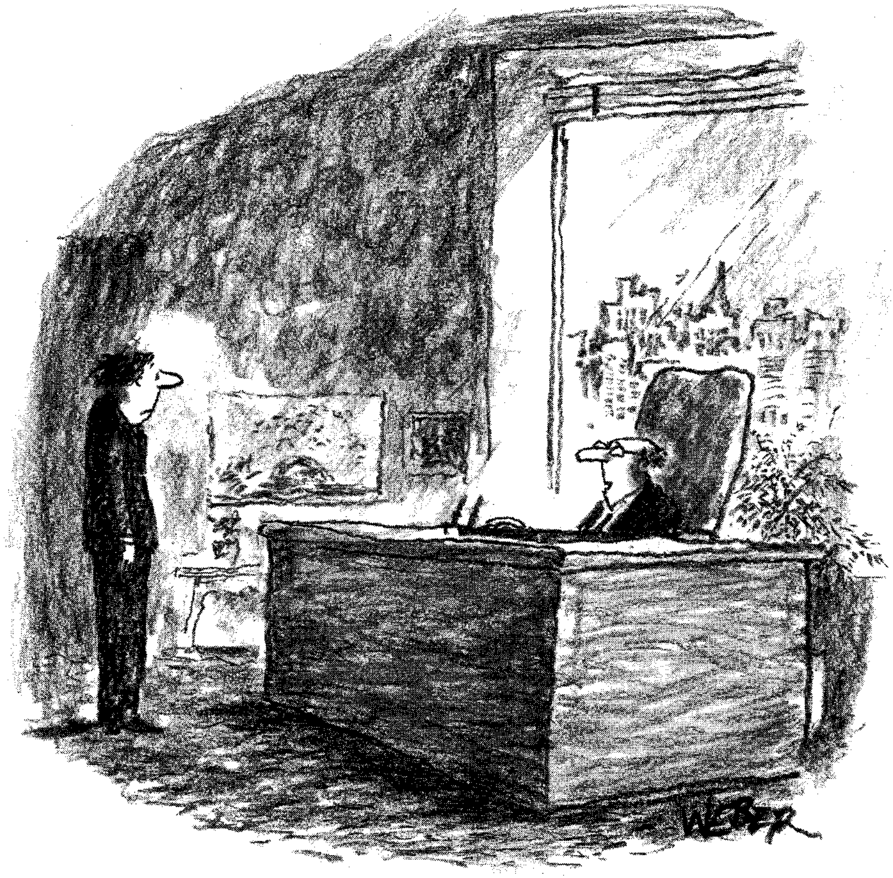
The Mayor left, but Kelly stayed and took questions. Some conferees looked as though they'd just arrived from a Saudi village, others from the Afghan mountains. There were turbans, djellabahs, tall black embroidered caps, red checked kaffiyehs, and Western suits, and many languages were spoken. Kelly listened closely to all questions and speeches, and gave respectful answers.

An African-American chaplain from the Department of Corrections was concerned about the treatment of Muslim women taken into custody. People were unhappy about being made to change their clothes, she said. Kelly said he would check out the protocol.

A Turk in a red kufi wanted to thank the police for twelve years of untroubled Ramadan parking at his mosque. This speech brought general applause.

Later, I told a senior police official about this pre-Ramadan lovefest. "Well, some of those guys in there don't talk quite so nice about us when they're back at the mosque," he said.

One of the men he may have had in mind was Amin Awad, a co-founder and the president of the Al-Farooq mosque, in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn. Awad was at the pre-Ramadan conference at One Police Plaza—indeed, he goes every year. Sheikh Rahman preached at Al-Farooq in the early nineteen-nineties, and until 1994, according to the *Times*, the mosque openly raised money for Osama bin Laden. In 2003, Al-Farooq was implicated in a case in which the Justice Department accused a Yemeni sheikh of funnelling twenty million dollars to Al Qaeda. The *Daily News* called for the mosque to be shut down. In the end, the sheikh was convicted of providing material support to Hamas, not Al Qaeda, and no mosque officials were charged.



"I believe, Merkin, that my action today frees you to unleash your God-given talents, and pursue your dreams, in some other venue."

When I spoke with Awad in his tiny, third-floor office at Al-Farooq recently, he was circumspect about the N.Y.P.D. He has been a chaplain at a jail on Rikers Island for fifteen years, and he said that his advice to younger Muslims concerning the police is "Don't ever take the officer as your enemy." He also said that Al-Farooq's relations with the local precinct—the Eighty-fourth—were "very sweet." But then he made the disconcerting observation that he himself was still not sure who the September 11th hijackers were, or even if they were Muslim.

Zein Rimawi, a Palestinian who helps run the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, in Brooklyn, and who was also at the pre-Ramadan conference, is loudly critical of some police operations, including the Herald Square subway bombing plot, which he considers entrapment. But he is far more critical of the F.B.I., which he believes targets for harassment Muslim community leaders who decline to become informants. "We are like the African-Americans used to be. What they used to suffer, we are suffering now," he told me. He also said, however, that relations between local Muslims and the police vary from precinct to precinct, and that in his precinct, the Sixty-eighth, things could not be better. "We have a problem, we talk with the captain, he's very kind and gentle." He laughed. "I'm even going to be a police captain for a couple of hours later this month, just to see how the precinct works." On the other hand, in Sunset Park, where Rimawi is on the board of an Islamic school, relations with the precinct are not so warm.

Donna Lieberman, of the New York Civil Liberties Union, told me that she sees "lots of room for improvement" in the N.Y.P.D.'s treatment of the city's Muslims. For example, she said, the department often contradicts itself about not being an immigration agency. Suspects under arrest are routinely asked whether they are citizens, and their answers are sometimes turned over to federal authorities.

I asked Kelly if the N.Y.P.D.'s relations with the city's Muslim communities today are a challenge comparable to its dealings with the black community in the past. He looked a bit surprised. No, he said. The relationship with black New Yorkers went back, he said, "many, many years." The Police Department's relations with Muslims, Kelly said, weren't even an issue before September 11th. "There was no history of real or perceived abuse," he said. "We, institutionally, had not much contact with them. After 9/11, we have more."

Hardening the target: that's the term of art for the overarching goal of local counterterror work. It can help to know what's happening thousands of miles away, but a densely layered system of municipal defense is a terrorism deterrent of a special type. It says, basically, Try another town.

There are obvious limits to what local cops can prevent. As Sheehan told a symposium of terrorism experts at One Police Plaza last year, "I don't know what I can do about somebody bringing a nuclear bomb through the Port of Newark. That's the federal government's problem. You can drive yourself crazy thinking about that." The attack plans for September 11th did not originate or mature locally, and nothing about them would necessarily have appeared on the radar of even today's extended, hypersensitive, metropolitan terror-detection system. The attacks came, literally, out of the air. Other law-enforcement or national-security agencies might have caught and stopped them, but that was the point—that is exactly why New York has stepped up its defenses.

No counterterrorism program, no amount of homeland-security spending, can eliminate the threat. For politicians, there is a temptation to hype it, to practice the politics of fear. Some, like Bloomberg, have resisted the temptation; the Bush Administration has not. But spreading alarm is one of the aims of terrorism, and fearmongering subverts the counterterrorism effort, which essentially seeks to manage the threat. Cohen, talking to the same symposium as Sheehan, brought the N.Y.P.D.'s position into sharp focus when he said, "New York City sees more than a thousand arrests a day, and we have to watch them all—watch for the one that means something to us." That is a description of serious counterterrorism work. It is done quietly, incessantly, with no gratuitous public alarms.

Endless vigilance, no victory; success means nothing happens. Such anti-drama is the essence of prevention. Meanwhile, there is an element of theatre to a lot of counterterror work. The American "sleeper cells" that we have heard so much about—but whose existence has yet to be convincingly demonstrated—may prove to be as elusive as Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. Believing that jihadist fighters may be inside the United States waiting to strike feels, some days, like a paranoid leap of faith (other days, like after London, it may not). Sleeper cells, or something very like them, have been uncovered in Europe certainly, though there is nothing here comparable to the millions of angry young Muslims living there. The "enemy" here is still in large measure a phantom. It may be necessary to presume he exists, but when will that cease to be true?

The N.Y.P.D.'s Hercules teams are the city's street-level deterrent. Their deployment can be startling. A Chevrolet Suburban with blacked-out windows pulls up to the curb, doors fly open, and officers in Kevlar combat helmets and body armor, carrying M-4 assault rifles, rush to positions. Pedestrians freeze; some recoil. Motorcycle patrols often accompany the teams, and a bomb-sniffing dog is always there. The site may be a bank or a bus station or a concert hall—or an ordinary block with no self-evident potential target. The team knows why it is there; bystanders are left to guess. I watched a Hercules team in action one afternoon on Broadway, north of Columbus Circle. Some passersby ignored the commotion, many hurried away, but a few stopped to ask the officers what they were doing.

"We're here for you," they were told.

"It's for the Bible college," a woman said knowingly, pointing at the American Bible Society offices down the block. (Wrong.)

"It's the Israeli film festival," an older man said, pointing at a movie house in the other direction. (Right.)

"We're here to protect you."

An immaculately dressed sergeant from intelligence who was observing explained the scripted answers: "They don't want to find themselves in a debate about the intifada or Ariel Sharon."

Hercules deployments are "asymmetric," unpredictable—they deliberately follow no pattern. They are self-conscious displays of force, presuming the existence of enemy reconnaissance. "The goal is to create a hostile environment for terrorist operatives in the city," Detective Abad Nieves, a Hercules officer, told me.

Hercules commanders like to point to Iyman Faris, an Al Qaeda operative with designs on the Brooklyn Bridge. He was here, in 2002. We know what hotel he stayed in. We know what Pakistani restaurant near City Hall he ate in. He admitted, after his capture, in Ohio, in 2003, that he was plotting to destroy the bridge. After months of casing the target, he sent a message to his Al Qaeda handlers that "the weather is too hot," which investigators took as a reference to intensified police activity around the bridge. Hercules teams, acting on tips, provided much of that activity.

Most New Yorkers are happy to see the Hercules teams, according to the cops I asked. One of them said, "It's only tourists from the Midwest who don't like us, because Americans aren't used to seeing automatic weapons on the street. Foreigners are."

The people who did not seem intimidated at all, I noticed, were older women. Several of them marched right up to the warrior cops and asked if there was something they should be worried about. But it occurred to me that people who were not happy to see machine guns and military gear on Broadway might not feel comfortable saying so.

I asked Lieutenant Cory Cuneo, one of the Hercules officers posted outside the Israeli film festival, about the worst hostility he had encountered in this role. He said it had come from a woman outside the Winter Garden, across from Ground Zero.

"Why are you out here?" she said.

"There used to be two buildings right over there," Cuneo told her.

"That was just one event," she said. "It's being used to justify all kinds of horrible things."

"Just one event? Where are you from?"

"New York."

"No. Originally."

"New York."

"No way. Nobody who was born and raised here would ever say what you just said."

I thought the woman sounded like a New Yorker, all right. But, of course, Cuneo sounded like one, too. ♦

ANNALS OF MEDICINE

BLOODSUCKERS

How the leech made a comeback.

BY JOHN COLAPINTO

On a recent morning in Hendy, a tiny, rain-drenched town in southern Wales, a young man named Ioan Cunningham appeared at Biopharm, a commercial leech farm housed in a long, low brick building that sits on thirty-five acres of marshland near the center of town. Cunningham plays rugby for the local team, the Llanelli Scarlets, and during a match two days earlier he had slammed into another player and suffered a cauliflower ear. When the ear did not improve—it remained purplish-black and had swollen nearly inside out—the team's doctor sent him to Biopharm. There he was greeted by Carl Peters, the farm's thirty-year-old assistant manager, who pronounced the injury "one of the worst cauliflower ears I've seen." He invited Cunningham to take a seat in the small front office, and went down the hall to fetch some leeches.

Peters entered a large windowless room maintained at eighty-two degrees Fahrenheit. Dimly lit and quiet, the room contained sixty-seven aquariums stacked on steel racks that stretched from the floor to a height of six feet. From a shelf in an adjoining room, Peters removed a plastic jar filled with purified water and about ten dark, ribbonlike creatures. He lifted the lid and peered inside. Five hundred years ago, Leonardo da Vinci, in a sketch, attempted to capture the mesmerizing rippling motion with which leeches propel themselves through water. Peters was merely trying to identify the fastest swimmers—"Since those are hungriest," he said.

He darted his bare hand into the jar and, as though he were plucking a cigarette from an ashtray, seized a leech between his index and middle fingers and flicked it into a small plastic container. He repeated this feat, then clipped on the lid and carried the wriggling leeches back to the office where his patient sat, stoically waiting. Peters placed some cotton wool in Cunningham's ear canal—leeches can move with startling speed and are apt to crawl into any available orifice—and, with a pair of plastic forceps, brought one of the animals to the injured ear. The leech recoiled, curling back against the forceps' tongs. The second leech reacted similarly. "It's your hair products," Peters told Cunningham. With a wet cloth, he cleaned the hair around the ear and tried again. This time, the leech brushed its head against the bruised flesh and latched on.

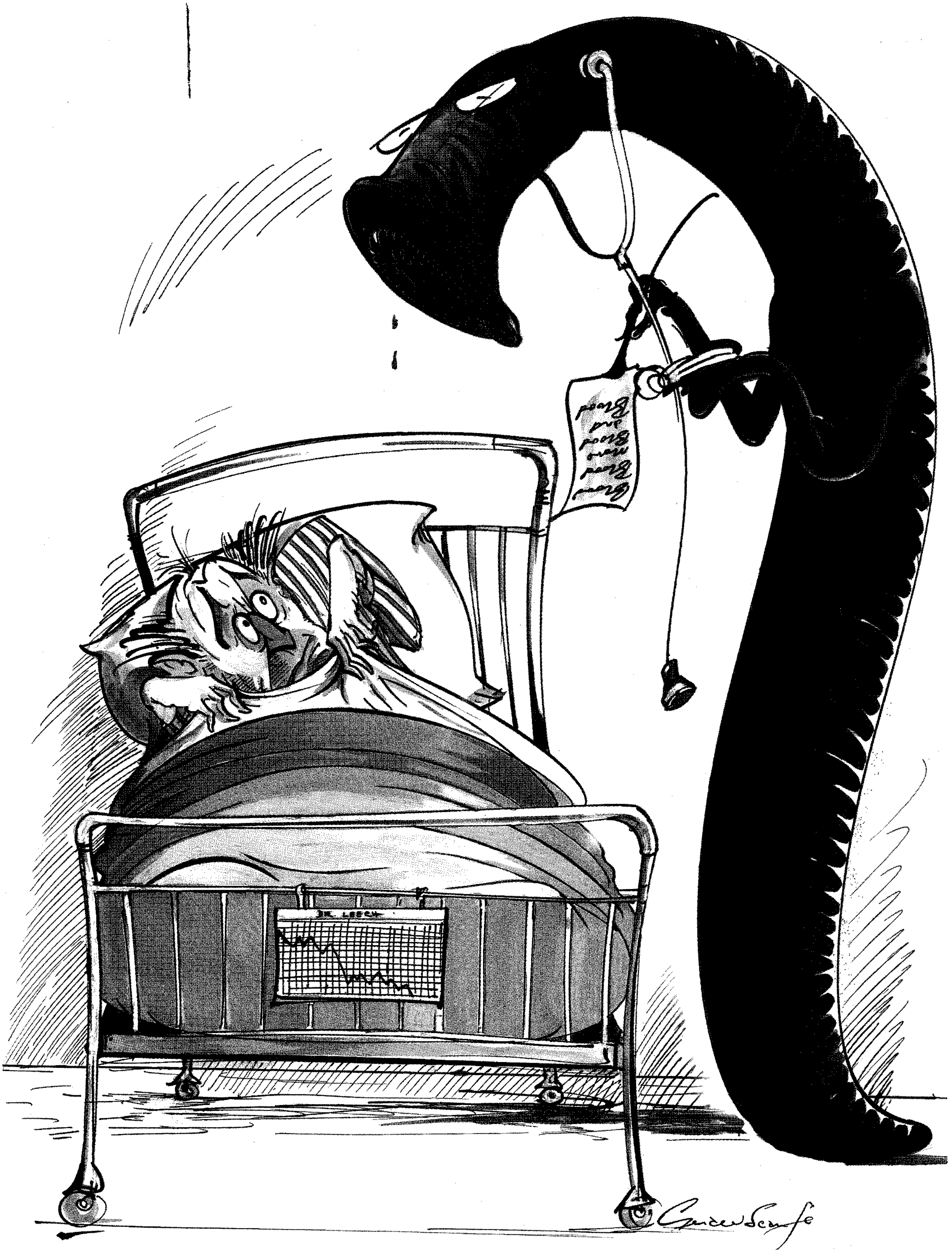
The leeches used for medicinal purposes are parasites, typically between two and four inches long, with disklike suction cups at either end of their bodies. They subsist on the blood of mammals, and have evolved over millions of years to take their meals with efficiency and stealth. At the center of a leech's head sucker are three jaws, arranged in a Y-shaped pattern and each containing about a hundred teeth, which penetrate the skin in a sawing motion. An anesthetic in the leech's saliva is pumped into the bite from minute ducts between its teeth. This is what had started to happen to Cunningham. "I felt a slight prick, then nothing," he said. As the leech began to suck, it released several other substances into his ear: a powerful anti-coagulant, which prevented his blood from clotting; a vasodilator, which opened his vessels, helping to increase blood flow; and a spreading factor, which moved these chemicals quickly into tissue farthest from the bite, liquefying any hardening blood. The leech grew bloated as it dangled from the ear, expanding to roughly seven times its normal size until it resembled a plump, glistening cigar. After twenty minutes, the animal released its jaws, dropped into the container Cunningham held open beneath it, and lay sated and immobile.

Cunningham was feeling better, too. His ear was noticeably pinker and smaller, but the full effect of the leeching would become apparent only over time, as his wound, infused with the animal's anti-clotting enzymes, continued to bleed heavily for the next few hours. "Come back in two days for one more leech and you'll be right as rain," Peters told him. Then he doused the leech in a weak solution of alcohol to knock it out—"More humane," he said—followed by a strong solution of alcohol, which killed it. He placed the dead leech in its container in the trash can beside his desk. "Think about it," he said. "It's like a dirty needle—that can walk."

Biopharm is one of the world's largest commercial leech farms. (There are three others, in France, Germany, and Russia.) Last year, Biopharm sold approximately fifty thousand leeches, most of them to hospitals in Britain and the United States. Once symbols of medical ignorance and barbarity, leeches are now on hand at many major American hospitals, where they owe their unlikely rehabilitation to a high-tech branch of medicine that emerged in the nineteen-eighties: microsurgery, in which doctors repair tiny blood vessels while peering through a microscope.

Bruce Minkin, a surgeon in Asheville, North Carolina, who performs microsurgery to reattach severed fingers, keeps leeches in a jar of distilled water in his office. "When you're sewing on a finger, it's relatively easy to join up the arteries that pump blood into the digit, because they're big and they've got thick walls," he says. "But it's tougher to connect the tiny veins that drain the blood away from the finger and back to the heart." When veins fail to connect properly, venous congestion—what Minkin calls the "sludging up" of excess blood—can occur. A congested finger will turn blue and cold

GERALD SCARFE


Blood
Blood
more
Blood
and
Blood
DR. LEECH

Some patients struggle with leeching, particularly in prolonged cases involving multiple leeches for up to ten days at a time.

and, unless circulation is quickly restored, will die.

A hungry leech drinks only about two teaspoons of blood during a typical feeding—not enough to drain a congested finger. The prolonged bleeding caused by the chemicals in the animal's saliva is what makes leeching so effective. Until recently, doctors lanced congested veins, or dripped anti-coagulants into the wound. But none of these techniques work as well as a leech bite, which creates what one expert calls an "artificial circulation," keeping a reattached appendage alive while the patient grows new veins. Last summer, the F.D.A. approved the leech for use as a medical device, making this only the second time that the agency has authorized such a use for a live animal. (Maggots, which can be applied to wounds to consume infected tissue, were approved in January, 2004.) Additional medical uses for the leech may be forthcoming: during the past decade, scientists have isolated enzymes and proteins in the animal's saliva that show promise for the treatment of eye disorders, cardiovascular disease, and osteoarthritis.

There are more than six hundred and fifty documented species of leech, and much of what is known about many of them is the result of research by Roy T. Sawyer, an American-born zoologist, who is Biopharm's founder. Sawyer, who is sixty-two, has studied leeches in more than thirty-five countries, and his three-volume, twelve-hundred-and-fifty-page study, "Leech Biology and Behavior," which was published in 1986, is unrivalled in authority and exhaustiveness. Lorna, Sawyer's wife of thirty-five years, who helps to manage Biopharm, says, "I knew that leeches would always be the first love of his life."

The Sawyers live with their adopted teen-age daughter, Bethany, in a handsome nineteenth-century stucco house on the Biopharm property. Sawyer's office, where he spends most of his time, is in the attic, and is reached through a large room lined with glass-fronted cases containing leech and bloodletting paraphernalia: antique leech jars, lancets, fleams, scarificators, cupping devices, bleeding bowls, and barber poles. (Nineteenth-century "barber-surgeons" not only cut hair but also bled patients, thus the red-and-white striped poles outside barbershops, which represent blood and bandages.) Sawyer's walls are covered with leech-themed prints and paintings, among them murky nineteenth-century oils of bewigged apothecaries, and a garish promotional poster for a 1960 pulp movie, "The Leech Woman." These items constitute a mere fraction of Sawyer's collection, the bulk of which he put on display in 1997 in a building in Charleston, South Carolina, which he maintained as a leech museum. (He closed the museum in 1999, and most of his collection is now in storage.) Sawyer's office is dominated by a desk on which are heaped unfinished manuscripts about aspects of the leech that he has somehow not yet managed to address in his published journal articles on the animal. A vigorous man with graying blond hair, a chiselled, ruddy face, and an unwavering gaze, Sawyer is simultaneously defensive about his chosen field—"By its very nature," he wrote at the beginning of "Leech Biology and Behavior," "a work like this prompts questions such as 'Why study leeches?'"—and self-deprecating. "I've only known one person to read it," he says of his magnum opus. "And he used it for insomnia."

Sawyer was born in southern Virginia, where his father was an administrator at Langley Air Force Base. As a child, Sawyer made frequent trips to the tiny town of Gum Neck, North Carolina, to visit his maternal grandmother, who lived near the Dismal Swamps, which are among the world's most biologically diverse temperate wetlands. Sawyer was six when, during one of these visits, he caught a turtle that had a slimy creature attached to its shell. "My grandmother explained to me that it was a leech," Sawyer says. "We kept it as a pet." Soon, he had a large jar of water filled with leeches. Early on, he recalls, his shadow fell across the jar, and the slumbering leeches instantly sprang to life, lunging at the shadow as if they were piranhas. "That's when I really started thinking seriously about leeches," he says. "How many animals have this kind of behav-

"You call this literature?"

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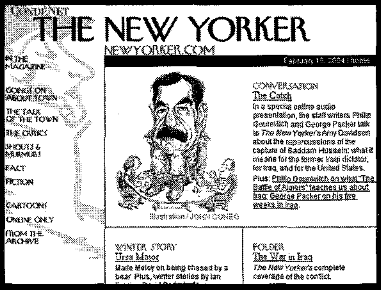

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Illustration / JOHN CUNEO

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In a special online audio presentation, the staff writers Philip Gourevitch and George Packer talk to *The New Yorker's* Amy Davidson about the repercussions of the capture of Saddam Hussein: what it means for the former Iraqi dictator, for Iraq, and for the United States.
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Maile Meloy on being chased by a bear. Plus, winter stories by Ian

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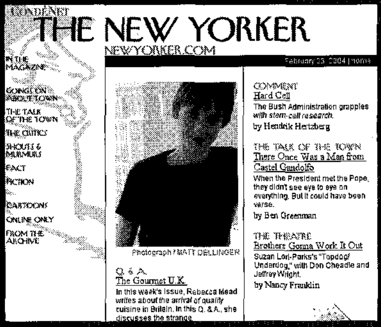

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Photograph / MATT DELLINGER

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The Bush Administration grapples with stem-cell research.
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There Once Was a Man from Castel Gandolfo
When the President met the Pope, they didn't see eye to eye on everything. But it could have been verse.
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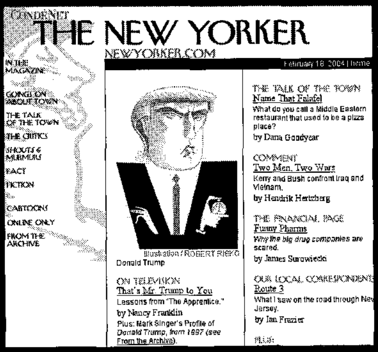

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Illustration / ROBERT RISKO
Donald Trump

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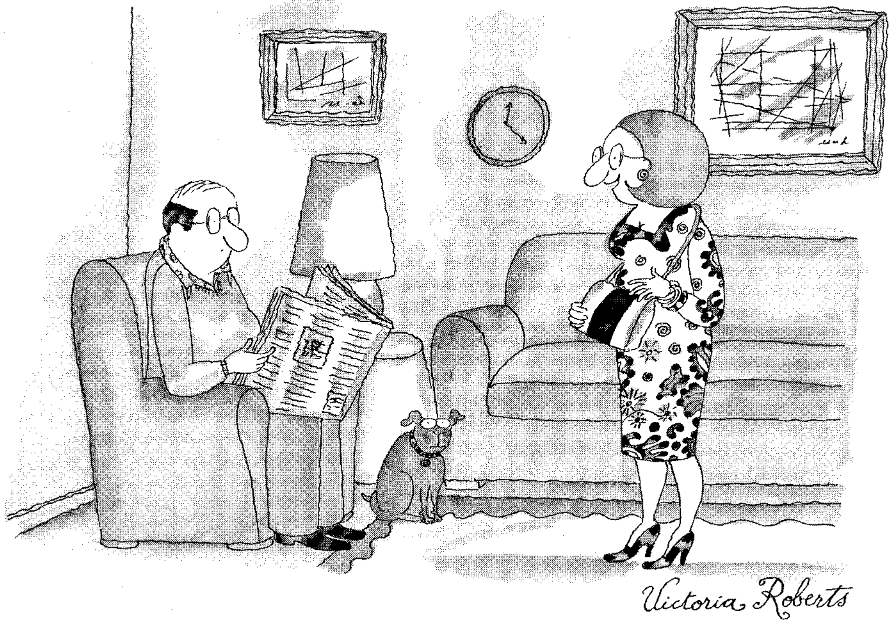
ior? How many invertebrates could be so quiet one moment and so aggressive the next?" At fourteen, while digging in the sand near his grandmother's home, he found a leech attached to his hand. He took it home—it was a species that he had never seen before—and dissected it. He wrote up his observations for a school biology report, his first paper on leeches.

The first member of his family to attend college, Sawyer received a degree in biology from Wofford College, in South Carolina, and a master's in zoology from the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor. Michigan was "leech heaven," he says, because of the huge numbers and varieties that inhabit the state's ponds and lakes. In 1967, he enrolled at the University of Wales at Swansea, to study for his doctorate under Professor E. W. Knight-Jones, at that time the world's leading authority on leeches. It was there that he met Lorna, an undergraduate majoring in English literature. "He was going to write the definitive book on leeches," she says. "It was his primary ambition in life."



"I'll be grateful for the small things, and you can be grateful for the big things—that way, we'll have it covered."

Leeches are found in virtually every kind of habitat—polar oceans, deserts, freshwater lakes, tropical marshes—and Sawyer knows something about all of them, including a species in the Sahara that lives in the noses of camels; one that resides in the anuses of hippopotamuses; a cave-dwelling leech in New Guinea that sucks on the blood of bats; and one that attacks the armpits of turtles. Only one species, however, is considered suitable for medicinal purposes: *Hirudo medicinalis*, a freshwater leech once abundant in the lakes and streams of Europe, whose highly sophisticated mouthparts make it ideal for feeding on the blood of mammals.

According to Sawyer, the earliest references to medicinal leeching appear in ancient Sanskrit writings by the Indian physicians Caraka and Sushruta, who recommended that leeches be applied to snakebites and boils, and around diseased eyes. For centuries, Asian healers concocted a beverage from dried leeches and water, which they used, Sawyer says, for a variety of complaints, from uterine inflammation to "inflamed nose." Galen, the second-century Greek physician, advocated leeching as a supplement to bloodletting, on the theory that health was maintained through a proper balance of the four humors: blood, phlegm, and yellow and black bile. In the early nineteenth century, the practice became a mania throughout Europe; leeches were prescribed for every human ill, from obesity to nymphomania, colds, asthma, vomiting, consumption, and dysentery.

This period of frenzied use, which peaked between 1820 and 1845, was largely due to the influence of François Joseph Victor Broussais, a surgeon for Napoleon's armies. Broussais's enthusiasm for the animal derived from his belief that all disease was caused by inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract; his remedy was to starve patients while aggressively bleeding them through leeching and venesection—opening a vein in the arm. He prescribed the use of as many as thirty leeches at one time, sometimes bleeding patients into unconsciousness. Sawyer calls Broussais an "extremist," whose indiscriminate use of leeches reflected the medical ignorance of the day. Yet some of the leeching treatments no doubt worked, he says, particularly in cases involving inflammation and localized swelling.

In the mid-eighteen-hundreds, some six million leeches a year were used in Paris hospitals alone. Young women waded into lakes and ponds to lure the animals onto their bare legs. According to the nineteenth-century French pharmacist M. C. Femnd (who published a monograph on the leech trade), in the Gironde, in France, each year some twenty thousand horses were driven into marshes to attract leeches, and many bled to death. In the United States, the indigenous species, *Macrobdella*, is not as effective a bloodsucker as its European counterpart, and during the nineteenth century Americans imported millions of leeches from Hamburg. By the end of the century, they had become extinct in Germany through overcollection.

In England, shortages began much earlier. Wordsworth wrote about a dispirited leech collector in his 1802 poem "Resolution and Independence." "Once I could meet with them on every side," the collector says mournfully of the leeches that once abounded in his pond. "But they have dwindled long by slow decay / Yet still, I persevere and find them where I may." Other Romantic poets had firsthand encounters with leeches. In 1824, Byron denounced his doctors as "a damned set of butchers" when they insisted on a treatment that included attaching twenty leeches to his brow as a cure for fever. He died a few days later.

The misuse of leeches by nineteenth-century physicians reached a ghoulish crescendo in the case of the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, who was treated for acute anemia in March, 1852. Vladimir Nabokov, in his book on Gogol, describes the "diabolically energetic physicians" who soused him with cold water and put him to bed with six "plump leeches affixed to his nose." Gogol, he writes, "kept pleading to have the leeches removed: they were dangling from his nose and getting into his mouth."

With Pasteur's discovery of germs, in the mid-eighteen-hundreds, and the publication, in 1892, of William Osler's textbook "Principles and Practice of Medicine," which helped to make germ theory the basis of medical practice, the leech fell out of favor—though it did not disappear from the sickbed. (In 1922, James Joyce, in an effort to halt his advancing blindness, was leeched around one eye, and in 1953 Stalin, dying from cerebral bleeding, was leeched by the physicians charged with keeping him alive by any means possible.) Still, by the time Sawyer began to write "Leech Biology and Behavior," in 1972, his professed goal of rehabilitating the leech as a therapeutic device seemed an eccentric fantasy.

Sawyer's book contains entire chapters on leech feeding habits, skin, mucous glands, connective tissue, pigmentation, foraging behaviors, and muscles. In the course of writing it, Sawyer said, he became convinced that the medicinal use of leeches in the past "was not accidental but instead was based on a high degree of evolutionary adaptation." Or, as he explains in the book's preface, "the leech is a living pharmacopoeia which is the mirror image of human physiology." In 1884, John Berry Haycraft, a British physiologist, had identified in *Hirudo medicinalis's* saliva a powerful anti-coagulant—the first natural anti-clotting substance ever discovered. It was purified in the mid-nineteen-fifties by Fritz Markwardt, a German scientist, and cloned in 1986. (A drug called hirudin, made from the anti-coagulant, is used to treat patients recovering from heart attacks.) But Sawyer, believing that more than two thousand years of leeching had to have produced some therapeutic benefits, suspected that the leech's saliva contained other healing compounds.

In the summer of 1983, when he completed his book—much of which he wrote in longhand, in an unheated cottage on Wales's Gower Peninsula, while Lorna supported them by teaching elementary school—Sawyer decided to create a "California-style biotechnology company," with the goal of identifying curative chemicals in the leech. That fall, he started Biopharm and began selling leeches in order to raise money for his own research. He financed the business with a bank loan of forty thousand pounds, secured with the only asset he and Lorna had, their cottage.

At first, the couple bred leeches in buckets in their garage. Their main customers were other scientists. The leech has unusually large and easily dissected nerve cells, which are ideal for studying nerve communication. John Nicholls, a neurobiologist at Harvard, mapped the leech's nervous system in the sixties, and his work was carried on by Gunther Stent, at the University of California in Berkeley, with whom Sawyer worked as a research associate for two years in the mid-seventies. As the Sawyers' customer base expanded to include microsurgeons, they were able to move their business to a warehouse in the nearby city of Swansea. But many doctors were resistant to leeching. Sawyer recalls addressing a conference of plastic surgeons shortly after Biopharm opened: "This doctor stood up and said, in a very condescending tone, 'Do you mean that you're starting a business based on the hope that we're going to be buying leeches from you?' " Some physicians argued that poor venous drainage in transplanted tissues indicated a surgeon's lack of skill in connecting veins, and balked at the idea of ceding control of a patient's treatment to a slug.

STATUES IN THE PARK

I thought of you today
when I stopped before an equestrian statue
in the middle of a public square,

you who had once instructed me
in the ways of equestrian statues.

A horse rearing up with two legs raised,
you told me, meant the rider had died in battle.

If only one leg was lifted,
the man had elsewhere succumbed to his wounds;

and if four legs were touching the ground,
as they were in this case—
bronze hooves affixed to a stone base—
it meant that the man on the horse,

this one staring intently
over the closed movie theatre across the street,
had died of a cause other than war.

In the shadow of the statue,
I wondered about the others

who had simply walked through life
without a horse, a saddle, or a sword—

pedestrians who could no longer
place one foot in front of the other.

I pictured statues of the sickly
recumbent on their cold stone beds,
the suicides toeing the marble edge,

statues of accident victims covering their eyes,
the murdered covering their wounds,
the drowned silently treading the air.

And there was I,
up on a rosy-gray block of granite
near a cluster of shade trees in the local park,
my name and dates pressed into a plaque,

down on my knees, eyes lifted,
praying to the passing clouds,
forever begging for just one more day.

—*Billy Collins*

Biopharm was struggling to break even when, on the morning of August 16, 1985, Guy Condelli, a five-year-old boy who lived in the Boston suburb of Medford, Massachusetts, had his right ear bitten off by a dog. During a twelve-hour operation, Joseph Upton, a reconstructive plastic surgeon at Children's Hospital Boston and a professor at Harvard Medical School, reattached Condelli's ear. Three days later, however, it turned blue-black from venous congestion. The boy was given blood thinners and his ear was lanced, but the organ was dying. Upton had once read an article about the use of leeches to drain congested tissue and, desperate, decided to track some down.

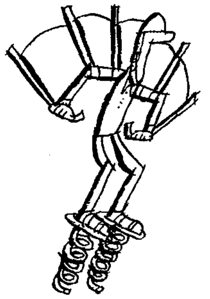
Upton had always been an adventurous doctor. As an Army surgeon during the Vietnam War, he had been posted at a large hospital in Augusta, Georgia, where soldiers wounded in Southeast Asia were flown for treatment. Many arrived with infections. Upton knew that Civil War battlefield doctors had used maggots to remove infected tissue from wounds. (Maggots feed only on necrotic flesh, leaving healthy tissue untouched.) He tried the technique and got splendid results. But when the Army hospital's chief of professional services realized what Upton was doing—some maggots hatched in a soldier's cast—he was threatened with a court-martial. With this experience in mind, Upton refrained from telling his superiors at Children's Hospital Boston about his plan to leech Condelli's ear. "If I had asked around Harvard—are you kidding me?" he says. Eventually, he reached Biopharm by telephone and spoke to Lorna, who drove a consignment of thirty leeches three hours from Swansea to London's Heathrow Airport and put them on a plane to Boston.

Upton attached two of the leeches to the upper helix of Condelli's ear, where the congestion was greatest. Within minutes, the organ began to turn pink, and after a few days it completely recovered. Upton became the first doctor to perform a successful microsurgical reattachment of a child's ear. The story became national news, and Upton began to get calls in the middle of the night from colleagues around the world, asking, "Where do we get the leeches?"

At first, American microsurgeons who used leeches tended to be daring physicians, like Upton. During the past decade, however, leeching has become part of the routine training for reconstructive plastic surgeons. Leeches are rarely used in cosmetic facial surgery, says Jeffery E. Janis, a plastic surgeon at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, since procedures such as eye lifts and chin tucks tend not to cause acute venous congestion. "I've used them in breast reconstruction, on lower-extremity reconstruction, on hand and microsurgery, and scalp replants," Janis says. "You don't want to have to use them, but it's always nice to know that they're there, and it's kind of an ace in the hole."

No living organism can be made completely sterile, however, and the leech's gut contains a digestive enzyme, *Aeromonas hydrophilia*, that can be harmful to humans whose immune system is weak. Sawyer estimates that one in every two thousand patients contracts a bacterial infection from a leech. At Biopharm, the leeches, which can live for more than a year on a single meal, are starved for at least twelve months before they are sold, in order to reduce the bacteria and insure that the animals will be hungry when they are introduced to a patient. But starvation cannot entirely eliminate the bacteria, so antibiotics are frequently administered to patients before a leeching.

Some patients struggle with what Janis calls "the psychological ramifications" of leeching—particularly in cases of prolonged treatment involving multiple leeches for up to ten days at a time, which may be necessary in order to relieve major congestion in large body parts or tissue grafts. "I spend a lot of time with those patients, knowing that it's a very unusual circumstance for any layperson and even for most medical people," Janis says. "Usually, it's after they've undergone hours and hours of surgery—some nights, we'll be up all night putting on five fingers, or a whole hand, or doing a bilateral breast reconstruction that'll take six to ten hours. At that point, the patients are, like, 'I'm in your hands, I'm in God's hands. Do whatever you want, pull out all the stops.'" Janis and Minkin, the North Carolina surgeon, say that none of their patients have ever refused a leeching. "When it's a choice between having a leech and losing a finger, they always choose the leech," Minkin says.



Profits from leech sales rose during the nineteen-eighties, and in 1990 Sawyer moved Biopharm from Swansea to Hendy. Leeches are fussy, and it took Sawyer years to perfect his breeding technique. "You can spend such a long time feeding them to the right size to lay cocoons," he says. "But if you do something wrong—if you give them a cold shock, a blast of cold air, anything like that, they won't bother breeding, or they won't lay many cocoons, or their embryos will be malformed." He credits Carl Peters, who joined Biopharm fourteen years ago as a teen-ager, with making the farm more efficient. Peters designed Biopharm's unique water-filtration system—which incorporates ultraviolet-light sterilization, carbon filters, and something called "foam fractionation"—and his labor-saving innovations have allowed Sawyer to reduce his staff from ten workers to two. (In addition to Peters, there is a manager, Marian Gower, who has been with the company for eighteen years.)

The farm's breeding room is adjacent to the front office, where Peters and Gower take phone orders, and contains sixty-seven aquariums, each tilted at a thirty-degree angle, the lower end filled with a few inches of water, the raised end lined with a bed of soft sphagnum moss. The leeches—eight to a tank—spend most of their time in the water breeding. Because leeches are hermaphrodites, they can fertilize each other during the act of reproduction. The act itself is low-key: two leeches interlock and lie still. A few days later, a gravid leech will swim up to the dry end of the tank, slither into the moss, and secrete a foamy football-shaped cocoon containing twelve to fifteen infants. The babies stay in their cocoons for eighteen to twenty-five days before they hatch. Hatchlings are notoriously active, and, in the past, when Sawyer allowed them to emerge from their cocoons naturally they ended up all over the room. Peters now controls the process by snipping off one end of the cocoon with scissors and squeezing the pale-pink, wriggling hatchlings into a container, which he seals with a tight mesh fabric.

When the hatchlings are a few weeks old, Peters gives them their first meal: a jelly-like cake of hardened pig's blood, collected from a local slaughterhouse. The hatchlings feed on the blood through the mesh fabric. Full-grown leeches take their meals differently. One morning, I watched Peters drop about thirty adult leeches into a tank filled with water. Then he poured fresh sheep's blood through a funnel into a two-foot length of cellulose sausage casing, tied off the end, and placed the blood-filled sausage in the tank. The leeches swarmed the sausage, latching on in thick clusters, and began to feed. The sausage slowly wilted, and the water blossomed with red gore as the leeches, having completed their meal, detached and floated lazily away.

The biggest leeches are returned to the tilted tanks to become breeders. The others are taken to a cold, windowless room containing eighteen shallow vats, each of which holds purified water and two thousand leeches. Here they remain, unfed, before they are shipped to clients. Nearly every day, Peters prepares several orders of between ten and thirty leeches for hospitals in the United Kingdom, and in the course of a month he gathers about five thousand leeches to be divided among Biopharm's distribution centers in Italy, South Africa, Japan, Korea, and the United States. Since medicinal leeches are an endangered species in Europe (they have never recovered from the aggressive collecting of the nineteenth century and the later draining of their habitats for farmland), they are subject to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, which allows them to enter this country only in limited numbers.

In the United States, Biopharm's leeches are sold by the Carolina Biological Supply Company, in Burlington, North Carolina, which charges eight dollars per leech—more for same-day delivery. Lisa Darmo, a biologist who is the head of marketing for the company's Live Biology Group, says that she has received requests for leeches from producers of reality shows, including "Fear Factor," on which contestants have eaten the animals. "I always try to talk them out of it," Darmo says. "They never ask if it's O.K. to eat them. They just worry if it's entertaining." (Apart from the slight risk of bacterial infection, eating a leech shouldn't hurt you, she says, "especially if it's cooked.")

By 1990, Sawyer had raised enough money through a combination of grants and loans to subsidize the biochemical research that had prompted him to take up leech farming in the first place. A large room at the facility was converted into a laboratory, and Sawyer began to pay six full-time Ph.D. students to conduct experiments on leech saliva. He was particularly interested in the giant Amazon leech, a near-mythic creature that he had rediscovered nearly a century after its last known sighting.

Sawyer had first read about the giant leech in 1975, in the papers of an obscure Italian naturalist, Vittore Ghiliani, who in 1849 described a species of monstrous leech in the Amazon basin which grows to the length of a man's forearm and feeds on the blood of mammals through a six-inch-long needlelike proboscis that it inserts into its host. Ghiliani brought a specimen to Italy and deposited it at the University of Turin's zoology museum. Fifty years later, a French scientist reported seeing giant leeches in the swamps of French Guiana, and claimed that "a few of these enormous leeches are sufficient to kill a cow or a horse." Sawyer knew of proboscis leeches that feed on fish, frogs, and reptiles, but he had never heard of one that feeds on mammals.

In 1976, while researching leech embryology with Gunther Stent, at Berkeley, Sawyer proposed an expedition to find the giant leech, and, in August of the following year, he set out for the coastal marshes of French Guiana with a team that included a doctor, a lab technician, a chemical engineer, and a reporter for the Los Angeles *Times*. The group waded barelegged into the water, in the hope of luring the leech onto their flesh. Sawyer later described the trials that they faced in an article published in *Natural History:* possible attack by "electric fishes," virulent mosquitoes, biting flies, bedbugs, and a vampire bat hat tried to squeeze through a window creen into their lodgings. After six days without a sign of the giant leech, the eam moved to a new location, closer o the sea. In a marshy area, they found submerged boat that was mired in vegetation and rolled it over. Something arge and dark swam out from underneath. James Bleakley, the chemical engineer, grasped it in his hands. It was the giant Amazon leech: a greenish-brown, eighteen-inch specimen, which he flung onto the grassy shore. Only when Sawyer picked up the leech did he realize that there were hundreds of minuscule hatchlings attached to its belly. Dozens of babies fell off the mother and onto his hands. The Los Angeles *Times* reporter later described Sawyer frantically calling to his colleagues to help him remove the animals before they started feeding.

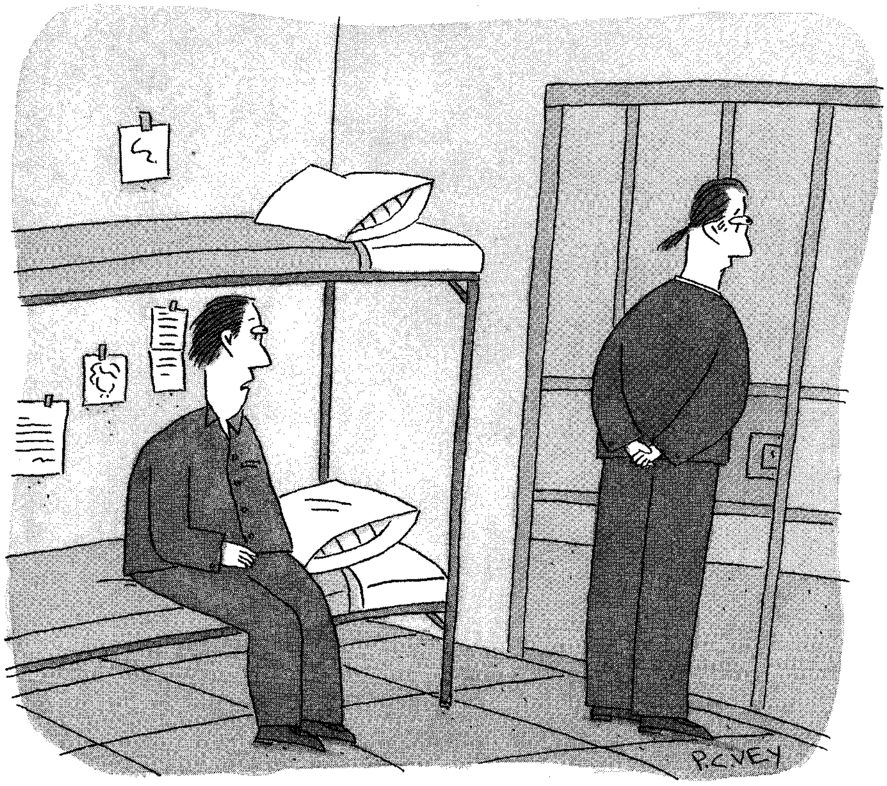
During the next five weeks, the team bagged thirty-five giant leeches, many of them juveniles, which they shipped back to California. Sawyer was convinced that the animal's unusual feeding system meant that the chemicals in its saliva were likely to be very different from those of the medicinal leech—or of any other leech. In the early eighties, he formed a research partnership with Andrei Budzynski, a professor of biochemistry at Temple University School of Medicine, in Philadelphia. Budzynski isolated an enzyme from the giant leech's salivary glands which he and Sawyer called hementin. Unlike the chemicals in the saliva of jawed leeches, which produce substances that prevent clots from forming, the hementin in the giant leech's saliva breaks down blood clots after they have formed—an adaptation, Sawyer theorized, of the animal's long feeding tube. "In sucking blood through this long tube, the giant leech has to cope with hematologic circumstances faced by no other animal species on Earth," he later wrote. "It takes about a minute for blood to pass along the length of the proboscis; this is slow enough for platelets to aggregate." Hementin's ability to dissolve clots gave it an advantage over existing cardiovascular drugs, but Sawyer was not able to begin the laborious and expensive process of developing the substance into a patent-worthy drug until he established a research team at Biopharm.

Most of the giant leeches from Sawyer's 1977 expedition had died by the time he started his farm, but he replenished his stock during two subsequent trips to the Amazon. Biopharm's staff tried to re-create the giant leech's tropical environment, including the twelve-hour cycle of equatorial light. Each feeding took a worker fifteen hours, since the leeches had to be tricked into thinking they were sucking on a living host. They were fed cow's blood, which was collected within thirty minutes of slaughter and placed, still warm, inside animal hides. The workers often used cow skin, but rabbit skin was also popular. "I ran over a squirrel one day on the way to work," Peters recalls. "It went straight into the boot." Peters also found that, to encourage the leeches to breed, it helped to stimulate them with gentle vibrations, which he generated by playing soft music—"Bach or a bit of Brahms," he says. The breeding room had to be kept at exactly eighty-six degrees, or the leeches would fail to get into the mood.

In 2000, after harvesting as many chemicals from the leeches' salivary glands as he could, Sawyer allowed the colony to die out. "I have regrets about it, but not serious ones," he said. "You could always do it again if you wanted to." He paused, and added dubiously, "But you'd have to go into the Amazon."

During the nineteen-nineties, Biopharm patented more than a dozen substances from the secretions of six leech species. From the European medicinal leech, the researchers isolated the spreading factor hyaluronidase (an enzyme that breaks down an acid that is a major component of the jelly of the human eyeball), and developed drugs that are currently being tested as treatments for ophthalmologic diseases, including glaucoma. The spreading factor, which Sawyer called orgelase (Welsh for "from the leech"), also dissolved the protective coating around many types of bacteria and enabled the body's immune system to attack the exposed germ—a possible explanation for the leech's prominent role in pre-modern medicine.

Sawyer is no longer the only scientist who believes that the leech has untapped potential as a treatment device. During the past several years, a team of doctors in Essen, Germany, have published a series of papers in leading medical journals, claiming extraordinary success in using *Hirudo medicinalis* to treat knee



"You can't blame everything on being home-schooled by bank robbers."

pain caused by osteoarthritis. The principal author of the studies is Andreas Michalsen, a German internist and cardiologist. For years, Michalsen had heard about lay healers in rural Germany, Austria, and Switzerland who treated arthritis pain with leeches. In 1999, he took a job at the Essen Clinic, which blends modern Western medicine and ancient healing practices (acupuncture, massage, Chinese medicine), and decided to try leeching his patients. He enlisted the help of his boss, Gustav Dobos, who is also an internist. Their first patient was a man in his nineties who was suffering from severe osteoarthritis of the knees. Michalsen applied four leeches to each knee. Two days later, the patient reported that his pain had vanished. The effect lasted for weeks. Then Michalsen and Dobos designed a small experiment involving sixteen patients. Ten were leeched; six used a topical gel. The control group experienced little improvement, but the leeched patients reported "rapid relief"—and remained free of knee pain at an examination twenty-eight days later. Michalsen and Dobos's study was featured in *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* in October, 2001.

A randomized controlled trial by Michalsen and Dobos involving fifty-one patients, twenty-four of whom were leeched while twenty-seven used the gel, obtained equally promising results. Every patient who was leeched reported not only greatly reduced pain but also increased mobility and function of the knee joints. The effect of a single leeching lasted up to three months in some of the patients and six months in others. The results were published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* in November, 2003. Since then, Michalsen and Dobos have conducted a larger study, yet to be published, involving four hundred subjects, of whom more than eighty per cent reported a significant reduction in pain.

In March, I visited Michalsen at the Essen Clinic, a sleek fifty-four-bed facility on the wooded banks of the Ruhr. Michalsen, a youthful forty-three-year-old who used to play guitar in a rock band, was trained in Western medicine but says that he became convinced that the use of bloodsuckers by lay healers must be based on sound medical principles. "Leeches were a mainstay of treatment for thousands of years," he said. "People weren't silly. For short periods of time, a crazy system of thought can prevail—I think we Germans know that best." He smiled ruefully. "But not for thousands of years."

From a closet near the reception desk, he took a plastic jar filled with Evian water and several leeches, and entered a room in which there were two hospital beds. On the bed neares the window, an eighty-one-year-ol woman with bright-blue eyes and a fac like a dried apple lay on her right side her hospital gown open to reveal he lower back, hip, and legs. Michalsen told me that she had arthritis in he spine and hip and suffered from severe pain that radiated down her leg. Red pinpoint bruises ran in a line down he left leg, marks left by a leeching five days earlier. The woman told me tha before she received leech therapy she had been unable to walk. Michalsen handed the jar to Nina Roy, a colleague who was examining the woman's back Roy dropped a leech into a small glass receptacle with a curled lip—a cupping instrument—and placed the cup against the woman's back, imprisoning the leech there. The animal latched on, Roy removed the cup, and the leech dangled free.

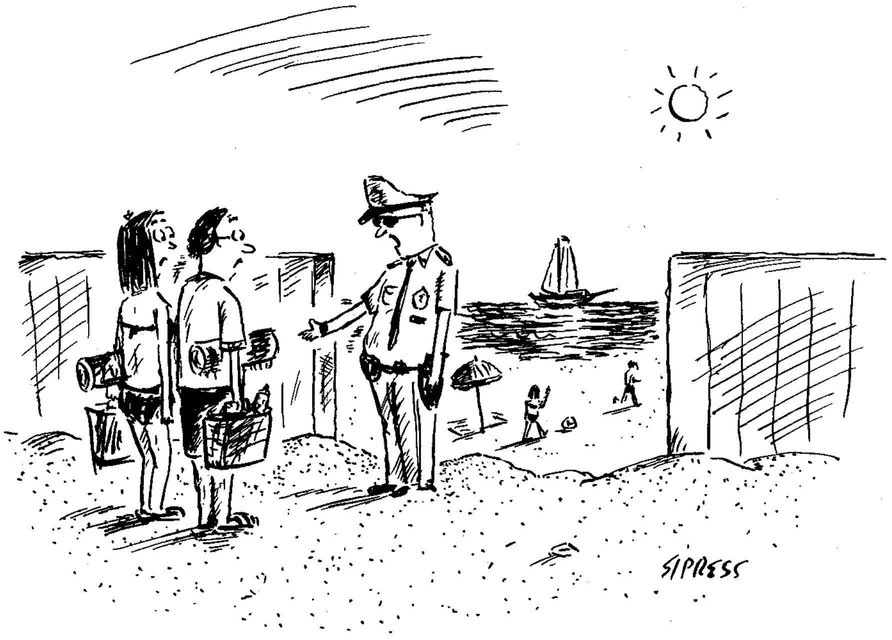
Beer Fancier magazine
ZIEGLER

The woman appeared not to mind the experience, but in another room, down the hall, a male patient in his late forties tensed at the sight of the leeches and complained of a "burning sensation" as Michalsen attached them to his arthritic right knee. "In German, we have the problem that the word for leech is *Egel*," he said with a weak smile, "and the word for disgust is *Ekel*."

In their published papers, Michalsen and Dobos speculate that the anesthetic in the leech's saliva could play a role in relieving their patients' pain. The vasodilators and anti-inflammatory enzymes, which penetrate deep into the joint with the help of the spreading factors, might also account for some of the analgesic benefits—and its long duration. The doctors believe that their results have been too consistent to be ascribed entirely to a placebo effect—an explanation offered by Marc Hochberg, an expert on osteoarthritis, who is the head of the division of rheumatology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

In an editorial that Hochberg wrote to accompany the Essen team's study in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, he pointed out weaknesses in the experiment: researchers knew which patients were leeched and thus were vulnerable to expectation bias; the patients knew which treatment they were receiving—it's impossible to administer a placebo-control leech bite—and this may have colored their responses; finally, the results were subjective, and based entirely on the patients' own assessments of their pain. Michalsen concedes these problems—and duly noted them in the published articles—but he rejects Hochberg's theory, arguing that a questionnaire filled out by patients before the leeching suggested that those who benefitted most from the therapy were not those who expected the greatest relief. "Besides, I can't imagine that a placebo effect of a single treatment would last several months," he added.

Woodson Merrell, an internist who is the executive director of the integrative-medicine department at Beth Israel Medical Center, in New York, read the Essen doctors' study. This fall, his clinic at Beth Israel, the Continuum Center for Health and Healing, plans to offer leech therapy for osteoarthritis of the knee, one of the first American hospitals to do so. "By nature, I'm a scientific skeptic," Merrell told me. "But I'm also very open to things that work. I think that's where this falls. It's wonderful when things that have been around for hundreds of thousands of years are being validated by modern approaches and research."



"Sorry, folks, but I'll have to see your tax return."

• •

The Essen doctors recently contacted George Stefano, who is the director of the Neuroscience Research Institute at the State University of New York at Old Westbury. Stefano has spent twenty-five years researching the effects of morphine in humans and invertebrates. Much of his work has focussed on the possibility that morphine, one of the most powerful naturally occurring painkillers, is produced not only by the poppy plant but also by animals, including humans. Building on research begun in the mid-seventies, Stefano and his team at SUNY have found morphine in mussels, lobsters, rats, animal parasites, and human tissue. In April, Stefano and his team completed preliminary research on the medicinal leech: they found morphine in its head region, which contains the leech's salivary glands.

When I visited Stefano at his office in Old Westbury, he led me down to the basement laboratory, where his team of researchers conduct experiments on animal tissue. Stefano asked Federico Casares, a Ph.D. candidate, to show me what happens "when you add morphine to cells." On a large-format digital camera, we watched a few seconds of film that Casares had recently shot, of lobster immune cells resisting a bacterial pathogen. "The principle here is that when immune cells are active their shape is irregular, they move about, they engulf bacteria, they clean up the area," Casares said. In people with arthritis, immune cells mistake healthy tissue for foreign tissue and attack it, causing pain. Casares then showed me a slide of the same lobster cells after they had been exposed to morphine. The cells had turned smooth, round, and still, like droplets of water. "In arthritis, the immune cell that is phagocytizing healthy tissue is going crazy!" Stefano said. "You add morphine, look what happens! They're round—inactive!"

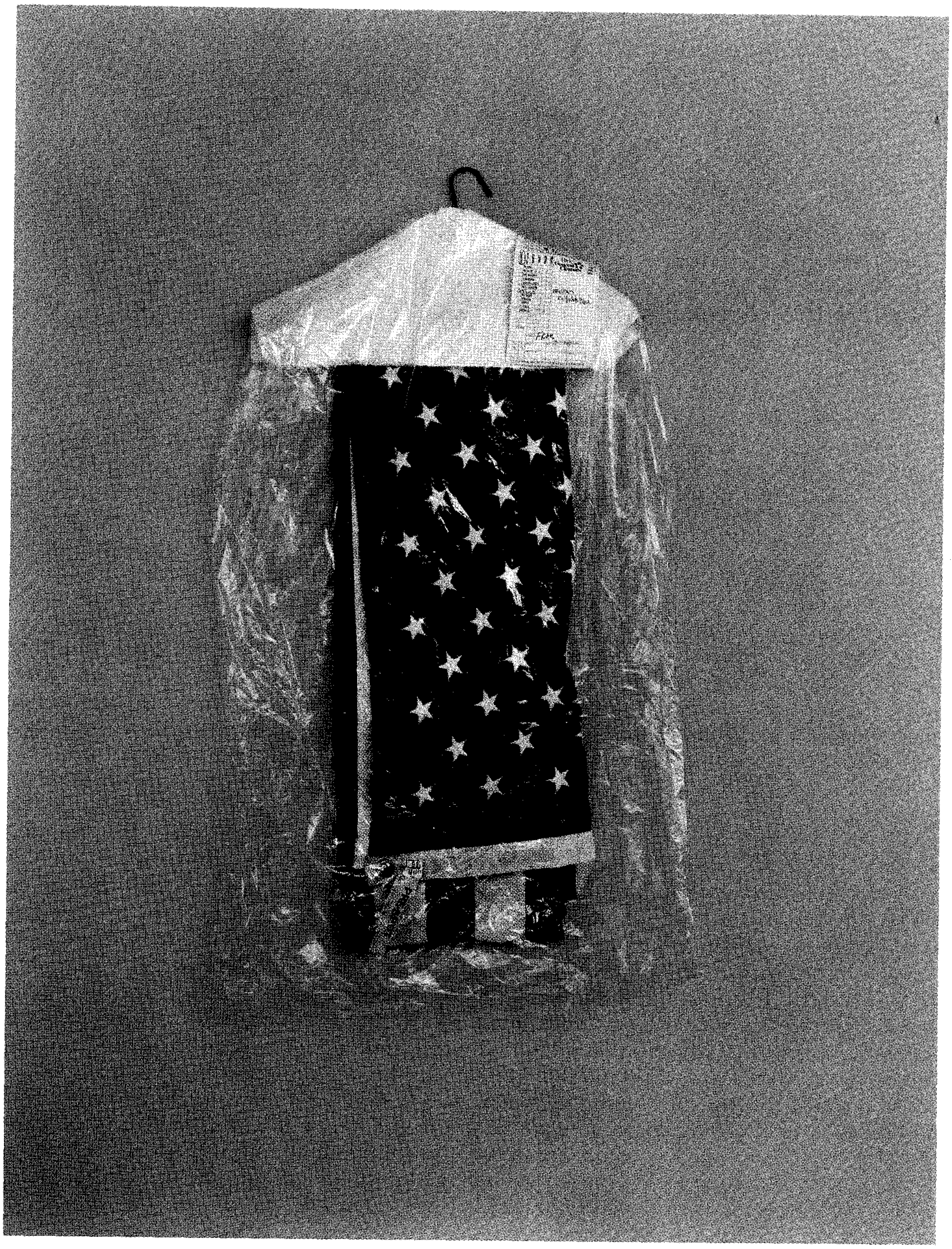
Studies of animal morphine are controversial. Critics say that the presence of morphine in animal tissues reflects sample contamination, often through the animal's food supply, since small amounts of morphine occur in substances like lettuce, milk, and hay. Stefano counters this charge with a list of the precautions that his laboratory takes: he and his staff test all the foods that the animals eat, all the microorganisms they are in contact with, and all the lab equipment they use. If other researchers confirm Stefano's finding of morphine in the head of *Hirudo medicinalis*, it might help account for the animal's apparent ability to reduce arthritis pain.

Sawyer was reluctant to venture an opinion on Stefano's research, saying that he no longer keeps up with the latest developments in leech science. In 1997, he sold a dozen of Biopharm's patents to a large European pharmaceutical company, closed his lab, and went into semi-retirement. He still collects leech memorabilia (he recently bought at auction a rare Max Ernst collage featuring a leech), and continues to conduct research on the history of the leech trade (his recent articles include "The Trade in Medicinal Leeches in the Southern Indian Ocean in the Nineteenth Century" and "A Study in Medical History: Introduction of Medicinal Leeches Into the West Indies in the Nineteenth Century"). He is also completing a book about the swamps of eastern North Carolina, where he encountered his first leech. Years ago, he liked to tell people that "secretions from bloodsucking animals could be to cardiovascular diseases what penicillin was to infectious diseases." I asked him whether he stands by that statement now. "Yes," he replied. "I completely believe that today as much as then." ♦

FICTION

AWAITING ORDERS

BY TOBIAS WOLFF



Sergeant Morse was pulling night duty in the orderly room when a woman called, asking for Billy Hart. He told her that Specialist Hart had shipped out for Iraq a week earlier. She said, "Billy Hart? You sure? He never said a word about shipping out."

"I'm sure."

"Well. Sweet Jesus. That's some news."

"And you are . . . ? If you don't mind my asking."

"I'm his sister."

"I can give you his e-mail. Hang on, I'll find it for you."

"That's O.K. There's people waiting for the phone. People who don't know any better than to breathe down other people's neck."

"It won't take a minute."

"That's O.K. He's gone, right?"

"Feel free to call back. Maybe I can help."

"Hah," she said, and hung up.

Sergeant Morse returned to the paperwork he'd been doing, but the talk of Billy Hart had unsettled him. He got up and went to the water cooler and drew himself a glass. He drank it and filled the glass again and stood by the door. The night was sullenly hot and still: just past eleven, the barracks quiet, only a few windows glowing in the haze. A meaty gray moth kept thumping against the screen.

Morse didn't know Billy Hart well, but he'd had his eye on him. Hart was from the mountains near Asheville and liked to play the hick for the cover it gave him. He was always running a hustle, Hart, engaged elsewhere when there was work to be done but on hand to fleece the new guys at poker or sell rides to town in his Mustang convertible. He was said to be dealing but hadn't got caught at it. Thought everyone else was dumb—you could see him thinking it, that little smile. He would trip himself up someday, but he'd do fine for now. Plenty of easy pickings over there for the likes of Billy Hart.

A good-looking troop, though. Some Indian there, those high cheekbones, deep-set black eyes; beautiful, really, and with that slow, catlike way about him, cool, aloof, almost contemptuous in the languor and ease of his movements. Morse had felt the old pull despite himself, knowing Hart was trouble but always a little taut in his presence, fighting the stubborn drift of his gaze toward Hart's face, toward that look of secret knowledge playing on his lips. Hart was approachable, Morse felt sure of it, open to whatever might offer both interest and advantage. But Morse kept his distance. He didn't give advantage, and couldn't take the gamble of a foolish entanglement—not now, anyway.

Morse had spent twenty of his thirty-nine years in the Army. He was not one of those who claimed to love it, but he belonged to it as to a tribe, bound to those around him by lines of unrefusable obligation, love being finally beside the point. He was a soldier, no longer able to imagine himself as a civilian—the formlessness of that life, the endless petty choices to be made.

Morse knew that he belonged where he was, yet he had often put himself in danger of scandal and discharge through risky attachments. Just before his tour in Iraq, there'd been the Cuban waiter he met in a restaurant downtown; the waiter turned out to be married, and a gambling addict, and, finally, when Morse broke it off, a blackmailer. Morse would not be blackmailed. He wrote down his commanding officer's name and telephone number. "Here," he said, "go on, call him"—and though he didn't think the man would actually do it, Morse spent the next few weeks inwardly hunched as if against a blow. Then he shipped out and soon came to life again, ready for the next excitement.

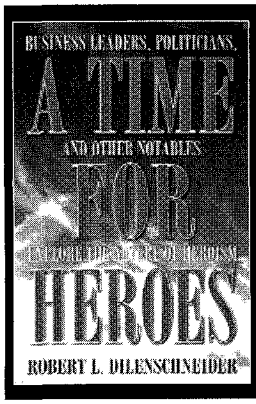
This turned out to be a young lieutenant who joined Morse's unit the week Morse arrived. They went through orientation together, and Morse saw that the lieutenant was drawn to him, though the lieutenant himself seemed unsure of his own disposition, even when he surrendered to it—with an urgency only heightened by the near-impossibility of finding private time and space. In fact, he was just discovering himself, and in the process he suffered fits of self-loathing so cruel and dark that Morse feared he would do himself harm, or turn his rage outward, perhaps onto Morse himself, or bring them both to grief by bawling out a drunken confession to a fatherly colonel in some officers' bar.

It didn't come to that. The lieutenant had adopted a mangy one-eared cat while they were on patrol; the cat scratched his ankle and the scratch got infected, and instead of going for treatment he played the fool and tried to tough it out and damn near lost his foot. He was sent home on crutches five months into his tour. By then, Morse was so wrung out that he felt not the slightest stirrings of pity—only relief.

He had no cause for relief. Not long after returning Stateside, he was called to battalion headquarters for an interview with two smooth, friendly men in civilian clothes who claimed to be congressional aides from the lieutenant's home district. They said that there was a sensitive matter before their congressman that required closer knowledge of the lieutenant's service in Iraq—his performance in the field, his dealings with other officers and with the troops who served under him. Their questions looped around conversationally, almost lazily, but returned again and again to the lieutenant's relations with Morse. Morse gave nothing away, even as he labored to appear open, unguarded. He figured these men for Army narcs, whatever else they said. They let several weeks go by before calling him to another meeting, which they cancelled at the last minute. Morse was still waiting for the next summons.

He had often wished that his desires served him better, but in this he supposed he was not unusual—that it was a lucky man indeed whose desires served him well. Yet he had hopes. Over the last few months Morse had become involved with a master sergeant in division intelligence—a calm, scholarly man five years older than he. Though Morse could not yet think of himself as anyone's "partner," he had gradually forsaken his room in the N.C.O. quarters to spend nights and weekends at Dixon's town house off post. The place was stuffed with ancient weapons and masks and chess sets that Dixon had collected during his tours overseas, and at first Morse had felt a sort of nervous awe, as if he were in a museum, but that had passed. Now he liked having these things around him. He was at home there.

But Dixon was due to rotate overseas



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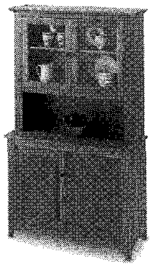

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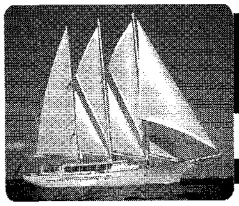

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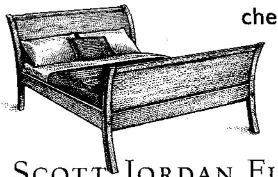

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before long, and Morse would soon receive new orders himself, and he knew it would get complicated then. They would have to make certain judgments about each other and about themselves. They would have to decide how much to promise. Where this would leave them Morse didn't know. But all that was still to come.

Billy Hart's sister called again at midnight, just as Morse was turning over the orderly room to another sergeant. When he picked up and heard her voice, he pointed at the door and the other man smiled and stepped outside.

"Would you like the address, then?" Morse asked.

"I guess. For all the good it'll do."

Morse had already looked it up. He read it to her.

"Thanks," she said. "I don't have a computer, but Sal does."

"Sal?"

"Sally Cronin! My cousin."

"You could just go to an Internet café."

"Well, I suppose," she said skeptically. "Say—what'd you mean, maybe you could help?"

"I don't know, exactly," Morse said.

"You said it, though."

"Yes. And you laughed."

"That wasn't an actual laugh."

"Ah. Not a laugh."

"More like . . . I don't know."

Morse waited.

"Sorry," she said. "Look, I'm not asking for help, O.K.? But how come you said it? Just out of curiosity."

"No reason. I didn't think it out."

"Are you a friend of Billy's?"

"I like Billy."

"Well, it was nice. You know? A real nice thing to say."

After Morse signed out, he drove to the pancake house she'd been calling from. As agreed, she was waiting by the cash register, and when he came through the door in his fatigues he saw her take him in with a sharp measuring glance. She straightened up—a tall woman, nearly as tall as Morse himself, with close-cut black hair and a long, tired-looking face, darkly freckled under the eyes. Her eyes were black, but otherwise she looked nothing like Hart, nothing at all, and Morse was thrown by the sudden disappointment he felt and the impulse to escape.

She stepped toward him, head cocked to one side, as if making a guess about him. Her eyebrows were dark and heavy. She wore a sleeveless red blouse and hugged her freckled arms against the chill of the air-conditioning. "So should I call you Sergeant?" she said.

"Owen."

"Sergeant Owen."

"Just Owen."

"Just Owen," she repeated. She offered him her hand. It was dry and rough. "Julianne. We're over in the corner."

She led him to a booth by the big window looking out on the parking lot. A fat-faced boy, maybe seven or eight, sat drawing a picture on the back of a placemat among the congealed remains of eggs and waffles and sausages. Holding the crayon like a spike, he raised his head as Morse slid onto the bench across from him. He had the same fierce brows as the woman. He gave Morse a long, unblinking look, then he sucked in his lower lip and returned to his work.

"Say hello, Charlie."

He went on coloring for a time. Then he said, "Howdy."

"Won't say hello, this one. Says howdy now. Don't know where he got it."

"That's all right. Howdy back at you, Charlie."

"You look like a frog," the boy said. He dropped the crayon and picked up another from the clutter on the table.

"Charlie!" she said. "Use your manners," she added, mildly, beckoning to a waitress pouring coffee at the neighboring table.

"It's O.K.," Morse said. He figured he had it coming. Not because he looked like a frog—though he was all at once conscious of his wide mouth—but because he'd sucked up to the boy. *Howdy back at you!*

"What is wrong with that woman?" Julianne said as the waitress gazed dully around the room. Then Julianne caught her eye and she came slowly over to their table and refilled Julianne's cup. "That's some picture you're making," the waitress said. "What is

FOR AN OLD GIRLFRIEND, LONG DEAD

Lying on that blanket, nights on the seventh green—
in the dry air the faint scent of gasoline,

nothing above us but the ragged moon,
nothing between but a whispered *soon* . . .

Well, such was romance in the seventies.
Watergate and Cambodia, the public lies,

made our love seem, somehow, more true.
Of the few things I wanted then, I *needed* you.

I remember our last arguments, my angry calls,
then the long silence, those northern falls

we drifted toward our newly manufactured lives.
Does anything else of us survive?

That day in Paris, perhaps, when you swore
our crummy hotel was all you were looking for—

each cobbled Paris street, each dry baguette,
even the worthless sous nothing you'd forget.

Outside, a block away, the endless Seine
flowed roughly, then brightly, then . . .

Then nothing. Nothing later went quite that far.
I remember that spring. Those breasts. That car.

—*William Logan*

it?" The boy ignored her. "You've got yourself quite the little artist there," she said to Morse, then moved dreamily away.

Julianne poured a long stream of sugar into her coffee.

"Charlie your son?"

She turned and looked speculatively at the boy. "No."

"You're not my mom," the boy murmured.

"Didn't I just say that?" She stroked his round cheek with the back of her hand. "Draw your picture, nosy. Kids?" she said to Morse.

"Not yet." Morse watched the boy smear blue lines across the placemat, wielding the crayon as if out of grim duty.

"You aren't missing anything."

"Oh, I think I probably am."

"Nothing but back talk and mess," she said. "Charlie's Billy's. Billy and Dina's."

Morse would never have guessed it, to look at the boy. "I didn't know Hart had a son," he said, and hoped she hadn't heard the note of complaint that was all too clear and strange to him.

"Neither does he, the way he acts. Him and Dina both." Dina, she said, was off doing another round of rehab in Raleigh—her second. Julianne and Bella (Julianne's mother, Morse gathered) had been looking after Charlie, but they didn't get along, and after the last blowup Bella had taken off for Florida with a boyfriend, putting Julianne in a bind. She drove a school bus during the year and worked summers cooking at a Girl Scout camp, but with Charlie on her hands and no money for child care she'd had to give up the camp job. So she'd driven down here to try and

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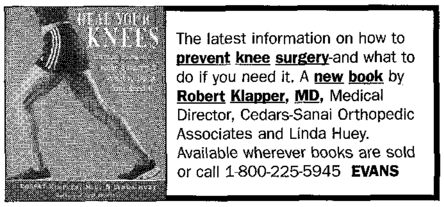
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shake some help out of Billy, enough to get her through until school started, or Bella decided to come home and do her share, fat chance.

Morse nodded toward the boy. He didn't like his hearing all this, if anything could penetrate that concentration, but Julianne went on as if she hadn't noticed. Her voice was low, growly, but with a nasal catch in it, like the whine of a saw blade binding. She didn't have the lazy music that Hart could play so well, but she seemed more truly of the hollows and farms of their home; she spoke of the people there as if Morse must know them, too—as if she had no working conception of the reach of the world beyond.

At first, Morse was expecting her to put the bite on him, but she never did. He did not understand what she wanted from him, or why, unprompted, he had offered to come here tonight.

"So he's gone," she said, finally. "You're sure."

"Afraid so."

"Well. Good to know my luck's holding. Wouldn't want it to get worse." She leaned back and closed her eyes.

"Why didn't you call first?"

"What, and let on I was coming? You don't know our Billy."

Julianne seemed to fall into a trance then, and Morse soon followed, lulled by the clink of crockery and the voices all around, the soft scratching of the crayon. He didn't know how long they sat like this. He was roused by the tapping of raindrops against the window, a few fat drops that left oily lines as they slid down the glass. The rain stopped. Then it came again in a rush, sizzling on the asphalt, glazing the cars in the parking lot, pleasant to watch after the long, heavy day.

"Rain," Morse said.

Julianne didn't bother to look. She might have been asleep but for the slight nod she gave him.

Morse recognized two men from his company at a table across the room. He watched them until they glanced his way, then he nodded and they nodded back. Money in the bank—confirmed sighting of Sergeant Morse with woman and child. Family. He hated thinking so bitter and cheap a thought, and resented whatever led him to think it. Still, how else could they be seen, the three of them, in a pancake house at this hour? And it wasn't just their resemblance to a family. No, there was the atmosphere of family here, in the very silence of the table: Julianne with her eyes closed, the boy working away on his picture, Morse himself looking on like any husband and father.

"You're tired," he said.

The tenderness of his own voice surprised him, and her eyes blinked open as if she, too, were surprised. She looked at him with gratitude; and it came to Morse that she had called him back that night just for the reason she gave, because he had spoken kindly to her.

"I am tired," she said. "I am that."

"Look. Julianne. What do you need to tide you over?"

"Nothing. Forget all that stuff—I was just blowing off steam."

"I'm not talking about charity, O.K.? Just a loan, that's all."

"We'll be fine."

"It's not like there's anyone waiting in line for it," he said, and this was true. Morse's father and older brother, finally catching on, had gone cold on him years ago. He'd remained close to his mother, but she died just after his return from Iraq. In his new will, Morse named as sole beneficiary the hospice where she'd spent her last weeks. To name Dixon seemed too sudden and meaningful and might draw unwelcome attention, and anyway Dixon had made some sharp investments and was well fixed.

"I just can't," Julianne said. "But that is so sweet."

"My dad's a soldier," the boy said, head still bent over the placemat.

"I know," Morse said. "He's a good soldier. You should be proud."

Julianne smiled at him, really smiled, for the first time that night. She had been squinting, and holding her mouth in a tight line, then she smiled and looked like someone else. Morse saw that she had beauty, and that her pleasure in him had allowed this beauty to show itself. He was embarrassed. He felt a sense of duplicity that he immediately, even indignantly, suppressed. "I can't force it on you," he said. "Suit yourself."

The smile vanished. "I will," she said, in the same tone he had used, harder an he'd intended. "But I thank you yhow. Charlie," she said, "time to go. et your stuff together."

"I'm not done."

"Finish it tomorrow."

Morse waited while she rolled up e placemat and helped the boy col- ct his crayons. He noticed the check nned under the saltshaker and picked up.

"I'll take that," she said, and held out er hand in a way that did not permit efusal.

Morse stood by awkwardly as Ju- anne paid at the register, then he walked utside with her and the boy. They stood gether under the awning and watched e storm lash the parking lot. Glittering nes of rain fell aslant through the glare f the lights overhead. The surround- g trees tossed wildly, and the wind sent leaming ripples across the asphalt. ulianne brushed a lock of hair back rom the boy's forehead. "I'm ready. How bout you?"

"No."

"Well, it ain't about to quit raining for harles Drew Hart." She yawned widely nd gave her head a shake. "Nice talking o you," she said to Morse.

"Where will you stay?"

"Pickup."

"A pickup? You're going to sleep in truck?"

"Can't drive like this." And in the ook she gave him, expectant and mock- ng, he could see that she knew he would ffer her a motel room, and that she was lready tasting the satisfaction of turn- ng it down. But that didn't stop him rom trying.

"Country proud," Dixon said when Morse told him the story later that morning. "You should have invited them to stay here. People like that, mountain people, will accept hospitality when they won't take money. They're like Arabs. Hospitality has a sacred claim. You don't refuse to give it and you don't refuse to take it."

"Never occurred to me," Morse said, but in truth he'd had the same intuition, standing outside the restaurant with the two of them, wallet in hand. Even as he tried to talk Julianne into taking the money for a room, invoking the seriousness of the storm and the need to get the boy into a safe dry place, he had the sense that if he simply invited her home with him she might indeed say yes. And then what? Dixon waking up and playing host, bearing fresh towels to the guest room, making coffee, teasing the boy—and looking at Morse in that way of his. Its meaning would be clear enough to Julianne. What might she do with such knowledge? Out of shock and disgust, perhaps even feeling herself betrayed, she could ruin them.

Morse thought of that but didn't really fear it. He liked her; he did not think she would act meanly. What he feared, what he could not allow, was for her to see how Dixon looked at him, and then to see that he could not give back what he received. That things between them were unequal, and himself unloving.

So that even while offering Julianne the gift of shelter he felt false, mealymouthed, as if he were trying to buy her off; and the unfairness of suffering guilt while pushing his money at her and having his money refused proved too much for Morse. Finally, he told her to sleep in the damned truck then if that was what she wanted.

"I don't want to sleep in the truck," the boy said.

"You'd be a sight happier if you did want to," Julianne said. "Now come on—ready or not."

"Just don't try to drive home," Morse said.

She put her hand on the boy's shoulder and led him out into the parking lot.

"You're too tired!" Morse called after her, but if she answered he couldn't hear it for the drumming of the rain on the metal awning. They walked on across the asphalt. The wind gusted, driving the rain so hard that Morse had to jump back a step. Julianne took it full in the face and never so much as turned her head. Nor did the boy. Charlie. He was getting something from her, ready or not, walking into the rain as if it weren't raining at all. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Salem (Mass.) News.

Officers responded to Beverly High School around 8 a.m. after someone reported a "suspicious sea gull" near an entrance to the school, according to a police report.

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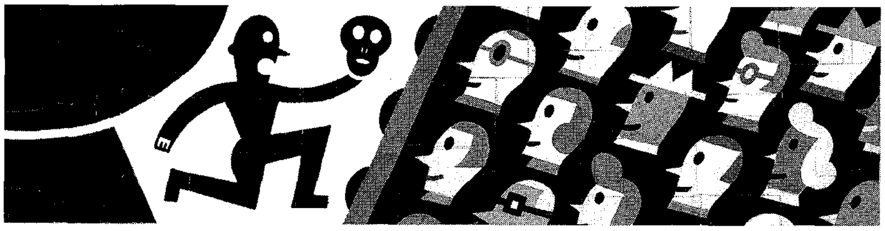


BOOKS

RED PLANET

The sanguinary sublime of Cormac McCarthy.

BY JAMES WOOD

To read Cormac McCarthy is to enter a climate of frustration: a good day is so mysteriously followed by a bad one. McCarthy is a colossally gifted writer, certainly one of the greatest observers of landscape. He is also one of the great hams of American prose, who delights in producing a histrionic rhetoric that brilliantly ventriloquizes the King James Bible, Shakespearean and Jacobean tragedy, Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner.

There is intense disagreement about McCarthy's literary status, which his new novel, "No Country for Old Men" (Knopf; $24.95), an unimportant, stripped-down thriller, will only aggravate. Some readers are alienated by his novels' punctual appointments with blood-soaked violence. ("No Country for Old Men" opens with a prisoner strangling a sheriff's deputy with the chain of his handcuffs.) Others think his work bombastic, pretentious, or claustrophobically male-locked: McCarthy has a tendency to omit half the human race from serious scrutiny. But a balanced assessment has been hard to come by, because his reputation, at least since the publication of "Blood Meridian," in 1985, has been cultic. He is swarmed over by fans, devotees, obsessives, Southern and Southwestern history buffs, and fiercely protective academic scholars. He lives quietly in New Mexico, and has given just two interviews in the past decade. His granitic indifference to his readership only feeds its almost religious loyalty.

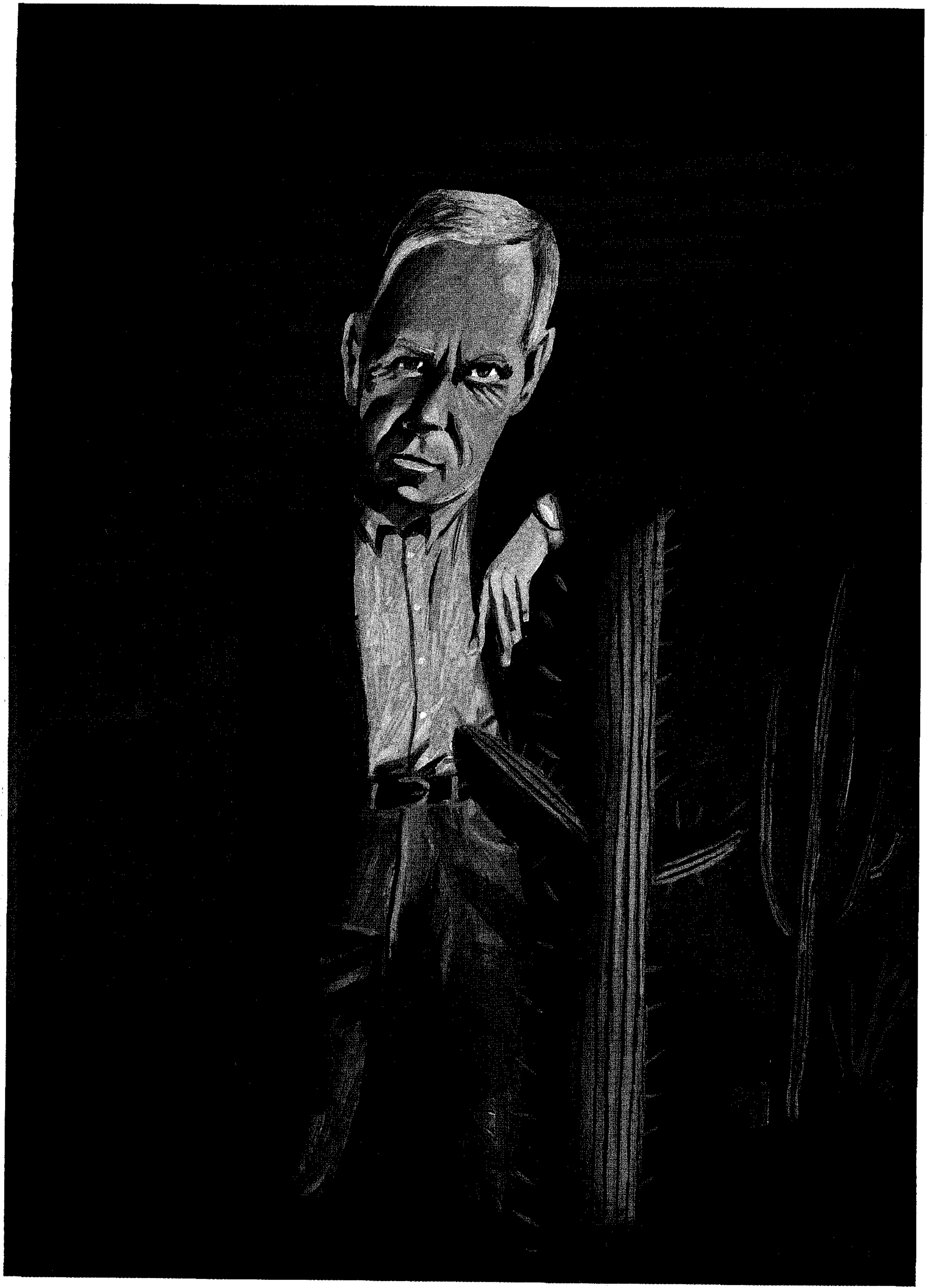
Surely no one disputes McCarthy's talent. He has written extraordinarily beautiful prose. He generally disdains the intermediate interference of small-bore punctuation. His sentences are commaless convoys, articulated only by the Biblical "and": "They'd had their hair cut with sheepshears by an esquilador at the ranch and the backs of their necks above their collars were white as scars and they wore their hats cocked forward on their heads and they looked from side to side as they jogged along as if to challenge the countryside or anything it might hold." They take on a hard, obstructive, processional quality; this is one of the reasons that McCarthy is so often called a mythic, or Biblical, or primordial writer.

He is also a wonderfully delicate noticer of nature. His first novel, "The Orchard Keeper" (1965), has this picture of lightning: "Far back beyond the mountain a thin wire of lightning glowed briefly." The protagonist of "Child of God" (1973), a psychotic necrophiliac named Lester Ballard, lights a fire in an old grate, and as it races up the disused chimney sees a spider that "descended by a thread and came to rest clutching itself on the ashy floor of the hearth." How strange and original that "clutching itself" is, and how appropriate that the loveless Lester Ballard might think this way about a spider's shrivelling. "Blood Meridian" is a vast and complex sensorium, at times magnificent and at times melodramatic, but nature is almost always precisely caught and weighed: in the desert, the stars
"fall all night in bitter arcs," and tl
wolves trot "neat of foot" alongside tl
horsemen, and the lizards, "their leath
chins flat to the cooling rocks," fend c
the world "with thin smiles and ey
like cracked stone plates," and the grai
of sand creep past all night "like armi
of lice on the move," and "the blue co
dilleras stood footed in their paler ima
on the sand like reflections in a lake
McCarthy liked this last phrase so mu
that he repeated it, seven years later, i
"All the Pretty Horses" (1992): "Whe
a pair of herons stood footed to the
long shadows."

In McCarthy, such repetition is a sig
not of haste but of a style that h
achieved consistency. That curious wor
"footed" is characteristic of his willin
ness to stretch the sinew of languag
with Shakespearean liberality. "Foote
to their long shadows" perfectly conve
the sense of a bird that is all foot and le
and that, moreover, seems fastened b
its feet to the ground. ("Footed to" sure
suggests "fitted to" or "fastened to," an
for this reason "legged to" wouldn
work.) McCarthy pulls off somethin
similar in "All the Pretty Horses" whe
he bends an adverb to describe the horse
"The horses stepped archly among th
shadows that fell over the road." And h
can describe the human form just as ex
actly; in the same novel, Rawlins is at
tacked in prison and flinches backward
"with his shoulders hunched and hi
arms outflung like a man refereeing hi
own bloodletting."

McCarthy is probably best known
though, for a rather different register, i
which his prose opens its lungs and bellows majestically, in a concatenation o
Melville and Faulkner (though McCarthy always sounds more antique, and thu
antiquarian, than either of those admire
predecessors). "Blood Meridian" is full o
such writing, in which the ragged and sordid band of American scalp hunter
and the avenging Indians are seen as Macbeth himself might have envisaged them in his blood-haunted soliloquies:

> A legion of horribles, hundreds in number, half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobed out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery and pieces of uniform still tracked with the blood of prior owners, coats of slain dragoons, frogged and braided cavalry jackets . . . and all the horsemen's faces gaudy and grotesque with daubings like a company of mounted clowns, death hilarious, all howling in a bar-



McCarthy has said that there is "no such thing as life without bloodshed," and his work gives eloquent witness to this vision.

> barous tongue and riding down upon them like a horde from a hell more horrible yet than the brimstone land of christian reckoning, screeching and yammering and clothed in smoke like those vaporous beings in regions beyond right knowing where the eye wanders and the lip jerks and drools.

On the strength of this kind of thing, Harold Bloom has called "Blood Meridian" one of the major aesthetic achievements of the age, and "a universal tragedy of blood." It is a risky way of writing, and there are times when McCarthy, to my ear, at least, sounds merely theatrical. He has a fondness for what could be called analogical similes, in which the linking phrase "like some" introduces not a visual likeness but a hypothetical and often abstract parallel: "And he went forth stained and stinking like some reeking issue of the incarnate dam of war herself."

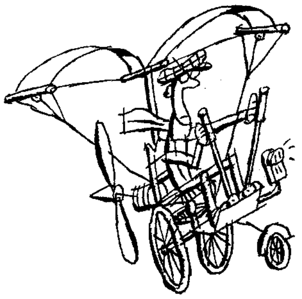
The danger is not just melodrama but imprecision and, occasionally, something close to nonsense. "All the Pretty Horses" opens with a now celebrated description of a train: "It came boring out of the east like some ribald satellite of the coming sun howling and bellowing in the distance and the long light of the headlamp running through the tangled mesquite brakes." It is dawn, hence the train's headlamp is seen as a satellite of the coming sun, and I suppose the wormlike train is vaguely phallic, hence "ribald." But surely "ribald" is a meaning too far. Does a train ever seem "ribald"? In the same book, a Mexican police captain, who has taken the cowboy heroes into custody, is described in a tone that reads like a juvenile parody of Conrad:

> Yet the captain inhabited another space and it was a space of his own election and outside the common world of men. A space privileged to men of the irreclaimable act which while it contained all lesser worlds within it contained no access to them. For the terms of election were of a piece with its office and once chosen that world could not be quit.

So hypnotic is McCarthy's mythmaking that it takes a moment to recognize the essential absurdity of the grand diction: this a small-town policeman! One assumes that "the irreclaimable act" is death or murder, but the peculiar syntax plays havoc with the meaning; and it is hard to see how "a space of his own election" is necessarily also a space that "could not be quit." What, never?

Curiously, McCarthy's new novel has almost none of the battered ormolu that makes his earlier prose so distinctive. There is one hokey moment when a violent assassin named Anton Chigurh stands over a Mexican drug dealer and shoots him, "watching his own image degrade in that squandered world," and the reader anticipates a rising paragraph of ornate plaint. But McCarthy is continent here, which is in keeping with the spirit of the novel. Everything is tight, reduced, simple, and very violent. McCarthy's idea for the Border Trilogy (which comprises "All the Pretty Horses," "The Crossing," and "Cities of the Plain") began life as a film script, and "No Country for Old Men" has already been sold to the producer Scott Rudin, so perhaps it is easier to think of it as a script than as a novel. That is to say, the book gestures not toward any recognizable reality but merely toward the narrative codes already established by pulp thrillers and action films. The story is itself cinematically familiar. It is 1980, and a young man, Llewelyn Moss, is out antelope hunting in the Texas desert. He stumbles upon several bodies, three trucks, and a case full of money. He takes the money. We know that he is now a marked man; indeed, a killer named Anton Chigurh—it is he who opens the book by strangling the deputy—is on his trail. As in such tales, there must also be a wife who is told, without much explanation, to pack her bags ("Here's what's goin on, Carla Jean. You need to get your stuff packed and be ready to roll out of here come daylight"); another assassin, whose job is to kill Chigurh and retrieve the money for another party; and, bringing up the rear, like a flailing old grampus, must be the police.

Other codes are studiously obeyed. There is a properly male attention to hardware: "a heavybarreled .270 on a '98 Mauser with a laminated stock"; "the shotgun was a twelve gauge Remington automatic with a plastic military stock and a parkerized finish"; "he unzipped the case and took out a stainless stee .357 revolver and went back to the bed" "a Tec-9 with two extra magazines and a box and a half of shells." And there is a proper male reticence. Carla Jean to Llewelyn: "I thought you was dead.' Llewelyn to Carla Jean: "Well I aint so dont go to slobberin.' " Throughout the book, the characters, if the word can be applied to these medallions of murder, fall into thought. But it turns out to be a briskly end-stopped affair: "He stood there thinking about that." "He sipped the wine and when the steak came he cut into it and chewed slowly and thought about his life." "He sat on the bed thinking things over. . . . He thought about a lot of things but the thing that stayed with him was that at some point he was going to have to quit running on luck." "I stood out there a long time and I thought about things." Here is Hemingway's influence, so popular in male American fiction, of both the pulpy and the highbrow kind. It recalls the language of "A Farewell to Arms": "He looked very dead. It was raining. I had liked him as well as anyone I ever knew." What appears to be thought is in fact suppressed thought, the mere ratification of male taciturnity. The attempt to stifle sentimentality—"He looked very dead"—itself comes to seem a sentimental mannerism. McCarthy has never been much interested in consciousness and once declared that as far as he was concerned Henry James wasn't literature. Alas, his new book, with its gleaming equipment of death, its mindless men and absent (but appropriately sentimentalized) women, its rigid, impacted prose, and its meaningless story, is perhaps the logical result of a literary hostility to Mind.



"No Country for Old Men" is, nevertheless, very gripping—it knocks the socks off, say, "The Ambassadors"—and can be read in a few idle hours. The writing is never uninteresting, and there are occasional glints of McCarthy's high talent. The dialogue, for instance, is often pungent and comic and unusual, so good that we can confidently expect the Hollywood version to excise it: "This whole thing is just hell in spectacles, aint it Sheriff." Chigurh carries with him a cattle gun, which can swiftly bore a two-and-a-half-inch hole in an unlucky vic-

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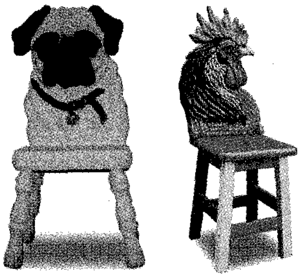

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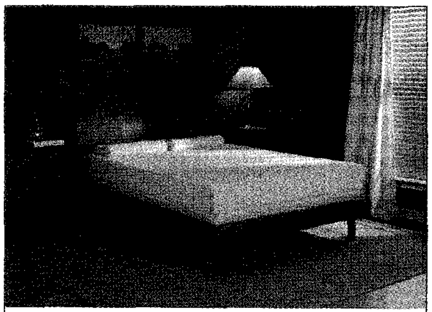

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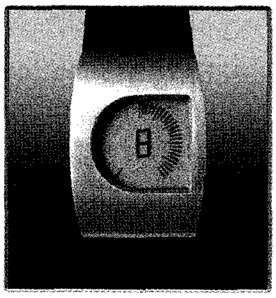

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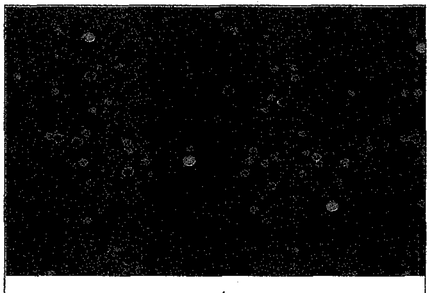

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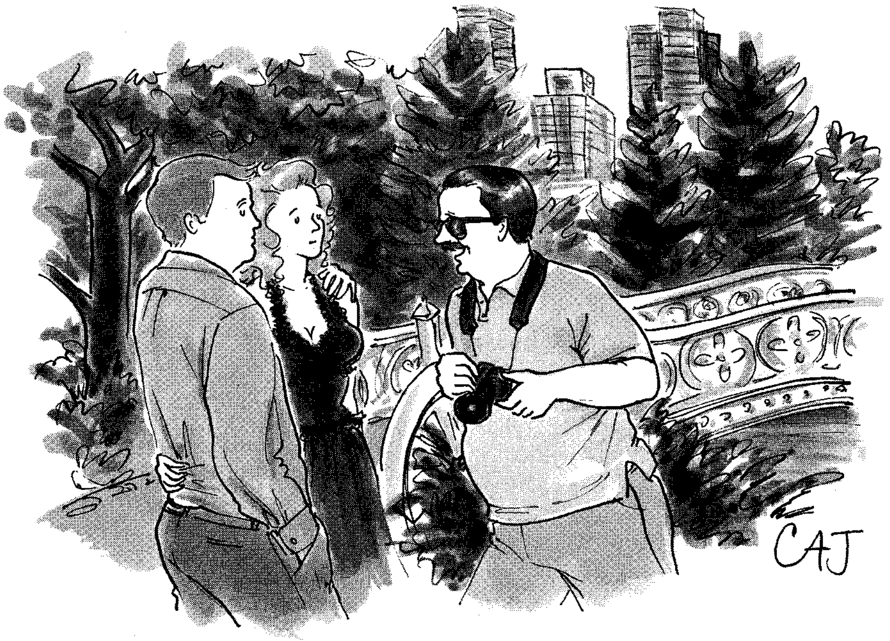

“Would you mind taking a picture of me with your girlfriend?”

• •

tim’s head. The sheriff realizes what Chigurh is using, and asks his deputy if he has ever been to a slaughterhouse and seen how they “kill the beef.” He receives this marvellous reply: “They had a knocker straddled the chute and they’d let the beeves through one at a time and he’d knock em in the head with a maul. He done that all day.” Speech has always been one of the glories of McCarthy’s fiction. He listens hard to Tennessean or Texan diction, and then reproduces it phonetically, with great, hospitable skill. “Kin we hep ye?” asks one man of another in “The Orchard Keeper.” In “Child of God,” a witness remembers how he and a friend found Lester Ballard’s hanged father:

> Me and Cecil Edwards was the ones cut him down. He [Lester Ballard] come in the store and told it like you’d tell it was rainin out. We went up there and walked in the barn and I seen his feet hangin. We just cut him down, let him fall in the floor. Just like cutting down meat. . . . The old man’s eyes was run out on stems like a crawfish and his tongue blacker’n a chow dog’s.

Chigurh, the assassin with the cattle gun slung over his shoulder, is reminiscent of the anarchist “professor” in “The Secret Agent,” who walks around London with a bomb attached to himself. Conrad’s professor explains that, unlike the life-distracted detective who is trying to arrest him, he has the advantage of thinking only about one thing: death. Chigurh is similarly monomaniacal, an agent of death. To one of his victims he says, “But I’m not like you. I live a simple life.” Late in the novel, Chigurh descends on poor Carla Jean. When she protests that she has done him no harm, and that he could spare her, he comes on all Attic: there is nothing that can change what has been preordained. He makes her call a coin toss; she loses the call. This, too, it seems, was fate: “Somewhere you made a choice. All followed to this. The accounting is scrupulous. The shape is drawn. No line can be erased. I had no belief in your ability to move a coin to your bidding. How could you? A person’s path through the world seldom changes and even more seldom will it change abruptly. And the shape of your path was visible from the beginning.”

I suspect that McCarthy hopes this high-flown nonsense will rub a little dignity into the novel’s spare textures. But what is exposed is the seriousness of Conrad’s engagement with evil—a political seriousness, as well as a moral one—and the hollowness of McCarthy’s, at least in this morally empty book. It is just not possible to exploit for entertainment the weightless codes of thriller-writing as ruthlessly as McCarthy does here, and then hope to come down at the end with a tilt of the ethical scales

McCarthy has said, in interviews, tha there is “no such thing as life withou bloodshed,” and that the novelist’s prope occupation is with death. His work give eloquent witness to this vision. Leste Ballard, watching two hawks, reflects tha “he did not know how hawks mated bu he knew that all things fought.” Judge Holden, in “Blood Meridian,” proclaims that war endures “because young men love it and old men love it in them.” The Duena Alfonsa in “All the Pretty Horses” announces that “what is constant in history is greed and foolishness and a love of blood and this is a thing that even God—who knows all that can be known—seems powerless to change.” McCarthy risks being accused of appearing to relish the violence he so lavishly records; this is the fate of the stylist who stoops to gore, and it seems an unfair complaint (though one never feels, as one always does in Dostoyevsky, the novelist flinching from the suffering he is recording). The problem with a novel like “No Country for Old Men” is that it cannot give violence any depth, context, or even reality. The artificial theatre of the writing makes the violence routine and showy. And McCarthy’s idea—his novelistic picture—of life’s evil is limited, and literal: it is only ever of physical violence. Though one wouldn’t want to turn McCarthy into Henry James, there are surely ways to use a novel to register the more impalpable forms of evil and violence as well as the palpable.

McCarthy’s novels are deeply engaged with founding American myths, in particular those of regeneration through violence, Southern pastoral, the figure of the sacred hunter, and the frontiersman’s conquest of the endless Western spaces. No doubt this explains, in part, the craggy language that is invariably used to praise him. (Michael Herr can be found on the cover of “Blood Meridian” hailing it as “a classic American novel of regeneration through violence.”) Hostile reviewers have at times decided, apparently along with celebrants like Herr, that McCarthy merely trumpets these myths, but that is too simple. “Blood Meridian,” for instance, clearly mounts what the scholar Sara Spurgeon calls “a sort of antimyth of the West.” Based on true events and actual documents, it narrates the story of a band of American mercenaries as they make their murderous and lurching passage along the Texas-Mexico border, flaying Indians and selling their scalps for gold. The stated ideal is noble, or noble enough—to make the area safe for Mexicans and Americans—but the means degrade the ends. The book is dominated by the terrifying Judge Holden, part Captain Ahab and part Kurtz, a canny Satan who announces that "war is god."

The Judge should not be confused with McCarthy, any more than Lester Ballard or Anton Chigurh should. But there is often the disquieting sense that McCarthy's fiction puts certain fond American myths under pressure merely to replace them with one vaster myth—eternal violence, or Bloom's "universal tragedy of blood." McCarthy's fiction seems to say, repeatedly, that this is how it has been and how it always will be. In "Child of God," we get this assurance: "As in olden times so now. As in other countries here." The mercenaries in "Blood Meridian" are said to ride "like men invested with a purpose whose origins were antecedent to them, like blood legatees of an order both imperative and remote." The inflamed rhetoric of "Blood Meridian" is problematic because it reduces the gap between the diction of the murderous judge and the diction of the narration itself: both speak with mythic afflatus. "Blood Meridian" comes to seem like a novel without internal borders.

Like most writers committed to pessimism, McCarthy is never very far from theodicy. Relentless pain, relentlessly displayed, has a way of provoking metaphysical complaint. Trapped in his cave, the Caliban-like Lester Ballard is seen as "so inculpate in the fastness of his hollow stone you might have said he was half right who thought himself so grievous a case against the gods." Judge Holden wonders, "If God meant to interfere in the degeneracy of mankind would he not have done so by now?," which is a kind of reply to a complaint made earlier in the book by an old hermit: "You can find meanness in the least of creatures, but when God made man the devil was at his elbow."

The new novel, though lacking such theological soundings, flirts with the theological. Chigurh, with his implacable loyalty to death, is a kind of devil who has appropriated a God-like omniscience: "When I came into your life," he tells Carla Jean, "your life was over. It had a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is the end." Chigurh, who gets Carla Jean to call a coin toss for her life, is a pale replication of Judge Holden, who similarly casts himself above moral reckoning and speaks an even more heightened language: "Suppose two men at cards with nothing to wager save their lives. Who has not heard such a tale? A turn of the card. The whole universe for such a player has labored clanking to this moment which will tell if he is to die at that man's hand or that man at his. . . . This enhancement of the game to its ultimate state admits no argument concerning the notion of fate." But McCarthy stifles the question of theodicy before it can really speak. His myth of eternal violence—his vision of men "invested with a purpose whose origins were antecedent to them"—asserts, in effect, that rebellion is pointless because this is how it will always be. Instead of suffering, there is represented violence; instead of struggle, death; instead of lament, blood.

Characters who ought to have distinct ethical shapes are gathered by this mythicizing into one bearish embrace, wherein the American mercenaries merge with the bellowing Indians and with the satanic Judge Holden, and Lester Ballard merges with the fighting hawks. Llewelyn Moss, the hunted, ought not to resemble Anton Chigurh, the hunter, but the flattening effect of the plot makes them essentially indistinguishable. The reader, of course, sides with the hunted. But both have been made unfree by the fake determinism of the thriller: "By the time [Moss] got up he knew that he was probably going to have to kill somebody. He just didnt know who it was." When Chigurh tells the blameless Carla Jean that "the shape of your path was visible from the beginning," most readers, tutored in the rhetoric of pulp, will write it off as so much genre guff. But there is a way in which Chigurh is right: the thriller form knew all along that this was her end. It is the perfect vehicle for McCarthy's deterministic mythmaking, matching his metaphysical cheapness with a slickness unto death all its own. ♦

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BOOKS

DEVIL'S WORK

Hilary Mantel's ghosts.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

When the English novelist Hilary Mantel was seven years old, she saw the Devil standing in the weeds beyond her back fence. In her memoir, "Giving Up the Ghost" (2003), she describes the vision:

> It is as high as a child of two. Its depth is a foot, fifteen inches. The air stirs around it, invisibly. I am cold, and rinsed by nausea. I cannot move. . . . It has no edges, no mass, no dimension, no shape except the formless; it moves. I beg it, stay away, stay away. Within the space of a thought it is inside me, and has set up a sick resonance within my bones and in all the cavities of my body.

This passage could serve as the epigraph for most of Mantel's novels. Her work is full of devils, literal devils, and when they are not present their place is filled by regular, shocking evil. Graves are robbed; a baby is drowned; a woman kills her mother. At the same time, the books are extremely funny. This doesn't cancel out the horror. What we are left with is a picture of people—not necessarily good people—muddlingly trying to explain to themselves the pain and unknowability of their lives. Is there a God? What's going to happen to us when we die? Eschatology crossed with comedy: this is Mantel's literary property.

In her new novel, "Beyond Black"—her ninth, her finest—she has mapped the territory as never previously, for this time the protagonist, Alison Hart, is a medium. Alison travels around the English suburbs, leading psychic meetings at which she calls forth radiant, happy spirits who want to communicate with their "earthside" survivors. She knows that whatever she offers will be taken up, because of the utter repetitiveness of human grief. All her clients have had a miscarriage, or lost their mother or a dear old granny who understood them as their mother never did. Otherwise, they wouldn't be attending a psychic meeting. So with every voice that Alison says she is channelling there is a loud sob from somewhere in the audience. She talks the woman (it's always a woman) through her grief, and speaks of "closure" and a "cycle of caring."

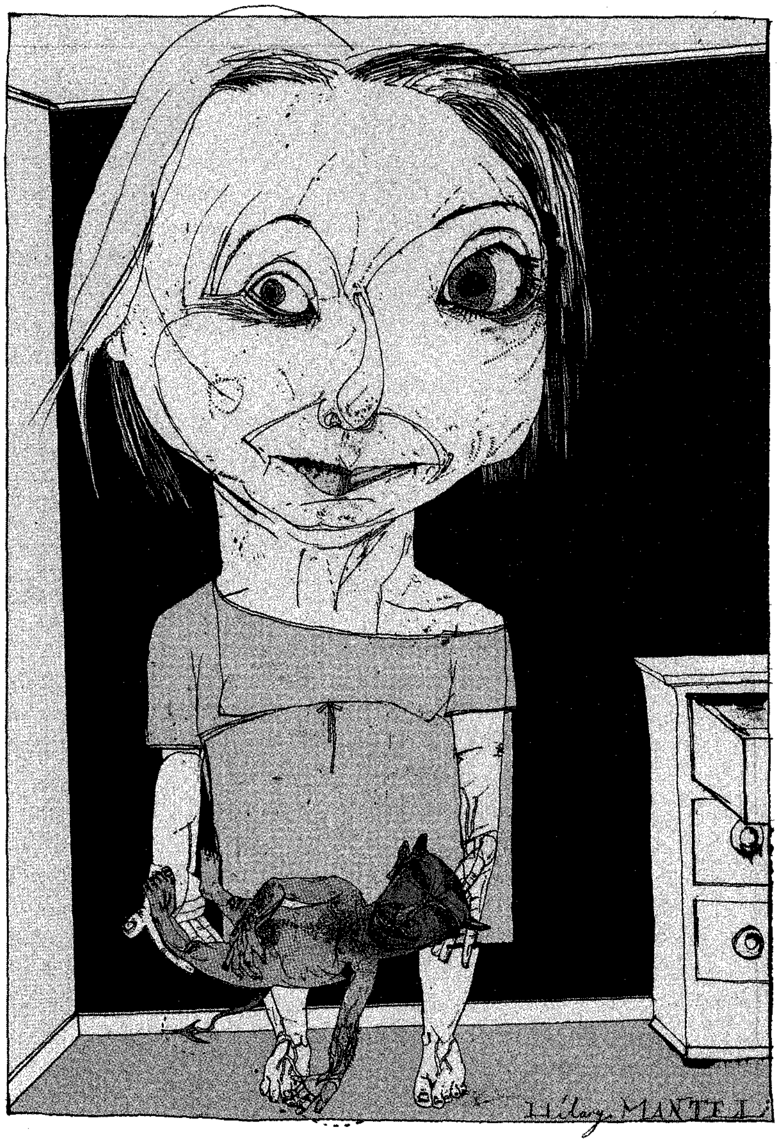
All of this is bogus. Alison does communicate with the spirit world, but not with one that she can tell her clients about. They think that the afterlife will be beautiful, and make sense, unlike life. She knows that it is just like life, foolish and crazy. Some of Alison's visitants are impostors; they claim they're Elvis or Glenn Miller. Others are just bores. One old lady natters on about how she's lost a button from her cardigan. Princess Diana appears. "Give my love to my boys," she says. She can't remember their names: "Oh, fuckerama! Whatever are they called?" Alison is depressed by these undignified visitors, and by no one more than her "spirit guide," Morris, a ghost who more or less lives with her. Other mediums, she says, have spirit guides named Oz or Running Deer, who say things like "The way to open the heart is to release yourself from expectation." Morris, by contrast, is a grizzled old criminal whose fly is often undone. While she is leading her psychic meetings, he is out in the parking lot, opening car doors, loosening the straps on baby seats. This transfer of lowlife realism to the spirit world is the novel's major comic device, but "Beyond Black" is only partly a comedy. Morris says that since he's been on "the other side" he's seen the Devil but not God.

Mantel comes from the working class—Irish Catholic immigrants, textile workers. She was born in 1952, in the village of Hadfield, near Manchester. Her mother went to work in the mills at fourteen. Her father was a clerk. Her childhood, she writes, was "distinguished by a pervasive quality of fear. The dead whistled in the walls; drawers contained photographs of babies who had failed to thrive, of a little girl burnt up in her own nightdress." For a while when she was eight, her field of vision was filled with "a constant, moving backdrop of tiny skulls." Around that time, a curious transition occurred in her home. The family took in a lodger, named Jack Mantel, and he replaced Hilary's father in her mother's life. The father didn't move out; he just moved to a different bedroom. In the evening, the mother and Jack would stay in the kitchen, the father in the front room. This went on for four years.

Hilary was the eldest of three children—a smart, bookish girl. Her mother was ambitious for her, and when Hilary was eleven the family moved from Derbyshire to Cheshire so that she could attend a good convent school. With the move, the father vanished; Hilary never saw him again. The family changed its name to Mantel, and Hilary was told to say that Jack was her father. At the convent, Mantel became "top girl"; after graduation she proceeded to law school. She married young, at twenty, whereupon her health broke down: she began having crippling pains in her legs and her gut. Her doctors, concluding that this was all in her head, treated her with psychotropic drugs, which, for a time, turned her into a raving maniac. She left school and took a job as a social worker. In 1977, her husband, Gerald McEwan, a geologist, accepted a post in Botswana; they lived there for five years. Then McEwan's work took them to Saudi Arabia, where they spent four years. In between, Mantel became sicker, figured out from medical books what her illness was (endometriosis), underwent a hysterectomy, divorced her husband, and married him again. As a result of hormone treatment, she seems to have more or less doubled in body weight. She says she is a size 20. "I'm like a comic-book version of myself," she told an interviewer.

All these matters—Botswana, Saudi Arabia; early love, love's failure; law, geology, social work; obesity or, as she sometimes portrays it, gigantism, freakishness—turn up in her novels. But, as is so often the case with writers, no part of her life is more central to her work than its earliest part: first, her family's secrets and lies; second, the visions. Sometimes she attributes the latter—including the Devil beyond the garden—to migraine aura, but elsewhere she offers no comforting medical explanation. "I am used o 'seeing' things that aren't there," she ays on the opening page of her memoir. Or—to put it in a way more acceptable o me—I am used to seeing things that ren't there.'"

As a young woman, Mantel despertely wanted to make a mark in the vorld. That's why she went to law chool. Her illness confined her to a sofa, nd so she did the one hing she could think to lo on a sofa: she started vriting. (She says she robably would never ave gone into literature therwise.) She began esearch for a novel on he French Revolution, nd when she moved to Botswana she took the ote cards with her and wrote the book. A publisher expressed interest, but then sent the manuscript back. That happened at around the same time as her hysterectomy—which, removing any hope of children, wounded her deeply—and the collapse of her marriage. This, she says, was the most terrible moment in her life.



Mantel's novels are full of evil. At the same time, they are extremely funny.

After her later successes, the novel on the French Revolution, "A Place of Greater Safety" (1992), was brought out. It is the fifth in the list of her published novels, but you can tell that it was written first. It is the most conservative of her books: a plain, excellent English psychological novel. Despite its setting, it is less violent than many of her other narratives. Its subject is three men who operated at the center of the revolution, Danton, Robespierre, and Camille Desmoulins: their personalities, their motives, their friendship. The dialogue is tart and natural, the pacing masterly. Even though we know what's going to happen, our hearts are in our throats. (Will Robespierre actually send his friends to the guillotine?) And the message is sorrow. At one point, Desmoulins, installed as a secretary of the provisional government, is sitting in his ministerial office. From the walls, portraits of the eminent old men who occupied this office before him, and whose regime he and his friends have just destroyed, look down on him. "It is all one to us," they say. "We are dead." As a child, Mantel was crazy about Shakespeare, and "A Place of Greater Safety" breathes his doleful knowledge, particularly about coups d'état. It is a very "grown-up" book—wise, skeptical, long (seven hundred and forty-nine pages)—of the kind that writers produce when they have not yet grown up and found their real story.

After finishing it, Mantel underwent the crisis of her late twenties (the surgery, the divorce), and then she discovered her story. Her next novel—her first published novel, "Every Day Is Mother's Day" (1985)—is utterly different from "A Place of Greater Safety." It is short, fast, and crazy. Here is the opening paragraph:

> When Mrs. Axon found out about her daughter's condition, she was more surprised than sorry; which did not mean that she was not very sorry indeed. Muriel, for her part, seemed pleased. She sat with her legs splayed and her arms around herself, as if reliving the experience. Her face wore an expression of daft beatitude.

Muriel, thirty-three years old, is pregnant—by whom, God knows. The deed may have been done by one of the many devils that inhabit the Axon house or—so thinks the mother, Evelyn—by Muriel's long-dead father, who was the neighborhood pedophile. Evelyn believes that Muriel is simpleminded; in fact, she seems to be a sort of feral child. When she was born, Evelyn decided that there was something wrong with her, and Muriel, for much of her life, has been kept in the house, lest anyone see her.

Soon Muriel's baby is born, and in Evelyn's opinion it (the sex is never specified) is quite peculiar, with large ears and wrinkled skin. It also cries all the time. "You never cried, Muriel," Evelyn says. It is a changeling, she declares, and what you do with a changeling is this: you place it in a body of water and let it sink, and then your real child, a proper child, comes floating back to you. So Evelyn puts the baby in a cardboard box and throws an old sweater over its face. Then she and Muriel go to the canal in the vacant lot near their house, and drop the box in. It sinks quickly:

> Inexplicably, Muriel leaned down and put a finger into the slime, as if she were testing bathwater. There was a kind of avidity in her

> face. . . . They waited on the bank for ten minutes. It was quite dark now. "It must be dead," Evelyn said at last. "They won't give you anything in exchange for a corpse. Well, I did the best I could for you, Muriel."

What is amazing about this scene is its dispassion. We may be sorry for that baby, but Mantel is not going to help us. There is only one hint of poignance: Muriel's testing the temperature of the water. Elsewhere, too, in the book, there are notes of pathos. At one point, we are given Evelyn's history. Her family broke up when she was thirteen; she was deposited with an aunt and uncle who found her expensive to keep; her uncle married her off to a strange man in his office, Clifford Axon. The uncle suspected Axon of being a sexual deviant, "but it was too late to do anything about that." Years later, as Evelyn thinks about all this, she silently addresses her daughter. "Muriel," she says, "if I could have mourned myself . . . I might have pitied you." Such moments go through one like a needle, partly just because they are so rare. Mantel, in her memoir, writes that when she approaches her house in the country at night there is always a scurrying in the bushes: "Something unseen is eating. Something is being consumed." That is what transpires in most of her novels, and she offers no blandishments.

Mantel has experimented with her gift; her books jump from genre to genre. After "Mother's Day" and an even blacker sequel, "Vacant Possession" (1986), she wrote a political thriller about Saudi Arabia, "Eight Months on Ghazza Street" (1988), which announced, if her previous books had not, her grievance over the status of women. The next novel was "Fludd" (1989), a theological mystery story. Here the Devil appears in person—he is handsome, has money, and is terrific in bed. Later, there was a coming-of-age novel, "An Experiment in Love" (1995), and, on its heels, something wildly different, "The Giant, O'Brien" (1998), which, like "A Place of Greater Safety," is set in the late eighteenth century, and concerns a freakishly tall Irishman who, starving at home (this was during the clearances), goes to London to make money by exhibiting himself as a curiosity. The book is biting in its politics and extravagant in its style. (The giant, a professional storyteller, often speaks in the language of Celtic romance.) In 2003, Mantel published her memoir, which, for all its useful information, I admire less than her other books, because it alone seems to complain. In her novels, Mantel is unflinching, and I like her that way.

In the middle of this series, she again wrote a rather traditional novel, "A Change of Climate" (1994), about an English couple, Ralph and Anna Eldred, who, while working in a mission in Botswana, become the victims of an appalling crime. Their infant son is kidnapped, to be sold, for body parts, to a spirit healer. On one level, "A Change of Climate" succeeds just as a thriller, but it is also a profound psychological novel. Ralph, despite what his family has suffered, refuses to admit the existence of evil; Anna, partly because of her husband's blindness, cannot forgive the world its evil. This is more than psychology, however. The Eldreds are Low Church Protestants and missionaries, people whose purpose in life is to do good. But why try to do good when evil, so much the greater power, keeps rising up and washing away your little meliorist efforts? This question is implicit in all of Mantel's novels—as a nun says in "Fludd," "God loves us. . . . He manifests it in cancer, cholera, and Siamese twins"—but it is never so soberly examined as in "A Change of Climate."

It's there in "Beyond Black," too. Alison is trying to help her clients. Meanwhile, day and night, devils speak filth in her ears. (Her dreams are such that in the morning her bed looks as though it has been struck by an earthquake.) There is also the matter of her childhood. Her mother was a prostitute and soon initiated Alison into the profession. Before that, Alison was often locked in the attic. She was lucky to be there. Downstairs, surrounding her mother, was a group of men (including Morris, alive at the time) carrying on some kind of horrible trade. There were sheds in the back yard, from which the men carried bloody parcels. The sheds were guarded by a pack of ferocious dogs accustomed to eating human flesh. Alison saw a severed head in a bathtub; she thought a disembodied eye was following her to school; her legs were slashed up, either by herself or by her mother's friends.

All of this, mercifully, is told only i flashes. We don't know what is real an what is imagined, because Alison doesn know. But much of it, clearly, is rea and, as in "Mother's Day," it is relate matter-of-factly. Only now and the does grief surface. At a certain point one of the guard dogs attacks Alison. Her mother's friend Keith pulls the animal off of her and carries her over t the kitchen sink, where he washes th wound. There is no mention of how Alison felt as the dog sank its teeth into he forehead, but when Keith finishes ministering to her "she felt a sudden sick cold at her back as he pulled away, a his body warmth left her." (He then goes across the room and beats up he mother.) That tells us how much body warmth she has experienced. Meanwhile, she is still going to school:

> She must make it [home] before dark. Clay is encrusted on her feet, and beneath them the track is worn into deep ruts. Her garments, which appear to be made of sacking—which may, indeed, be sacks—are stiffening with the day's sweat, and chafing the knotty scars on her body. . . . She stops and drinks from the ditch, scooping up the water with her fingers. She squats there, until the moon rises.

Again, such stabs of pathos are very sharp, in consequence of their rarity. Nor is the suffering all due to devils and criminals. I have stressed the *dramatis diaboli*, but in most of Mantel's novels there is a regular English reality going on that might make you wish for Hell instead. In "Mother's Day" a normal, middle-class household has a Christmas dinner that will console anyone whose recent holidays have been a disappointment. In "Vacant Possession" this same household's cleaning lady trudges upstairs to find all four children's rooms locked. Behind each door, someone is "sniffing glue and crying." The father of the family compares his ménage to the House of Atreus.

Ugly families, though, are only a subspecialty. Mantel is a master of ugliness in general. It is the engine of her satire on a world awash in fake respectability, fake cheer—a world of "closure" and "cycles of caring," of death as a cozy new job. And Mantel's ugliness is not the kind you can rationalize. It is not a matter of taste, or even, in many cases, of thought. It's physiological. In no other writer's work do people vomit as freuently as in Mantel's. We see their bad kin, their frightening coiffures. Alison's ssistant, Colette, has hair that lies across her skull "like strings of white licorice." Alison is hugely overweight (size 26), fact that Colette harps on cruelly and wittily. Much of the food in Mantel's books is disgusting; at one point Eveyn Axon eats a can of baked beans—"cold tan slime"—with her hands. The urniture could give you nightmares: curtains that look like knitted porridge, chairs warm from someone else's bottom. Cups are chipped, hedges bird-spattered; handkerchiefs often have something adhering to them. People walking in the dark tend to step on something they can't identify. And then, this being England, there is the weather. Children are blue-kneed; people rub their chilblains. Sunshine itself is sinister. In "A Change of Climate," when the sun peeps from behind the clouds it sends out a ray "like an arm reaching into a tent."

In Mantel's characters' lives, no emotion is more prominent than spitefulness—the wish that, in compensation for one's own pain, another person might suffer—but in these novels the environment itself seems to begrudge anyone's happiness. That Muriel should get her baby back (albeit in an unexpected form), and that the Eldreds should remain together, is a miracle. No one has any joy, but then, as Ralph Eldred's sister says, joy is a word for Christmas carols: "Survival, that's all—survival should be the ambition." Blessings do come, occasionally, but the characters barely know what to do with them. Here is Anna Eldred, who lost her first son, reacting to the birth of her second:

> When Julian was first placed in her arms . . . she felt a certain flinching, a pull away from him; she hated to place any burden of expectation on this fragile scrap of being wrapped in a shawl. She saw the tight folds of his lashless eyes, his sea-sponge mouth, forming and re-forming, the stiff mottled fingers that thrust through the cobweb knitting of the shawl: she tried to pretend she had no other son, that she was seeing a son for the first time. Julian had fair curls and soft eyes; he lay in his father's arms and trusted him. He did not remind her unnecessarily of her sharp, small, dark child, his fragile skull still showing when she lost him, the pulses visible, beating beneath that fluttering baby skin.

This is bitter. At the same time, Mantel's writing is so exact and brilliant that, in itself, it seems an act of survival, even redemption. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The All of Oppenheimer

American Prometheus, *by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin (Knopf; $35).* J. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who oversaw the creation of the atomic bomb, was lauded as a patriot after the United States dropped the bomb on Japan, but nine years later he was disgraced, accused of Communist sympathies and "substantial defects of character." This commanding biography, the result of twenty-five years of research, reëvaluates that character, and delivers the most complex portrait of Oppenheimer to date: a brilliant but insecure child prodigy who became a charismatic leader; a polymath who learned Sanskrit just so he could read the Bhagavad Gita; an aesthete who mixed infamously strong Martinis; a one-time fellow-traveller who was almost willfully naïve about politics. Drawing on thousands of pages of F.B.I. surveillance records, the authors contend that the scientist was never a member of the Communist Party.

The Ruin of J. Robert Oppenheimer, *by Priscilla J. McMillan (Viking; $25.95).* Oppenheimer lost his security clearance in 1954, after a rigged hearing during which his conversations with his lawyers were secretly recorded by the F.B.I. and he was never allowed to review the evidence against him. This compact study elegantly parses a central accusation in the case: that Oppenheimer was disloyal for opposing the hydrogen bomb—essentially, for voicing his opinion. Yet it was his prosecutors who compromised national security: one physicist they consulted absent-mindedly misplaced a classified document that contained all the details for launching a full-scale thermonuclear program; from the transcript of the hearing, the British gleaned enough information to develop their own H-bomb. The author concludes, depressingly, that scientists today rarely speak out, because they rely on military funding to pursue research.

109 East Palace, *by Jennet Conant (Simon & Schuster; $26.95).* In 1943, a young widow named Dorothy McKibbin was hired as Oppenheimer's assistant to run the Santa Fe office of the secret weapons laboratory at Los Alamos. At 109 East Palace Avenue, she greeted newly arrived scientists, reminding them to use their aliases while in town and never to identify themselves as physicists. Conant, whose grandfather was a Manhattan Project administrator, mostly sidesteps political issues to focus on the absurdities of day-to-day life at the desert lab. McKibbin fielded numerous complaints from the scientists' wives, who had to struggle with massive coal-belching stoves, hand-churned washing machines, and a chronic shortage of diapers. Meanwhile, their husbands, when not handling plutonium, drank heavily and played pranks: once, the operator of the P.A. system was heard paging Werner Heisenberg, who was otherwise engaged, in Germany, designing the Nazi bomb.

Oh Pure and Radiant Heart, *by Lydia Millet (Soft Skull; $25).* In Millet's surreal fifth novel, three physicists—Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, and Leo Szilard—are transported from their posts during the Second World War to the year 2003. After overcoming the usual time-travel quandaries—shock at children shouting expletives, unfamiliarity with power steering—the trio, being geniuses, quickly adapt. Szilard starts quoting rap lyrics. In penitence for their contributions to the creation of the atomic bomb, they set off on a mission to promote world peace, only to have their message hijacked by religious fanatics who believe that Oppenheimer is a herald of the Second Coming. The scientists want to stop nuclear proliferation, but it's the proliferation of stereotypes—relentlessly chipper New Agers, soulless Wall Street executives, militant evangelicals—that sabotages the author's attempt at lyrical transcendence.

DANCING

BACKSTORY

Revivals of long-absent works by Ashton and Balanchine.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

In 1952, at what is now Britain's Royal Ballet, Frederick Ashton created his "Sylvia," a ballet designed for his beloved ballerina Margot Fonteyn, and set to a beautiful score by Delibes. "Sylvia" repeated some things from Ashton's earlier ballets, and it had an old-fashioned pastoral plot, with nymphs and shepherds. A lot of people said it was a bore, and it was eventually retired. Thirteen years after the première of "Sylvia," George Balanchine unveiled his "Don Quixote," with a commissioned score by his friend Nicolas Nabokov. Here the problem was not so much that the ballet had a conventional plot but that it had a plot at all. In the preceding decades, Balanchine had developed his sharp, modernist, "leotard ballet" style. Why had he now reverted to a three-act story ballet, and one, furthermore, that seemed so emotionalized, even histrionic? To many this felt like a betrayal. Balanchine was very attached to his "Don Quixote," but after thirteen years he let it go, and, like "Sylvia," it was never seen again.

In time, after the deaths of Ashton and Balanchine, people began to think about these old, discarded ballets. Last year, Christopher Newton, who served as a ballet master under Ashton, reconstructed "Sylvia" for the Royal. He then came here and mounted the production on American Ballet Theatre. Meanwhile, Suzanne Farrell, for whom, when she was nineteen, Balanchine created "Don Quixote"—and who, as Dulcinea, essentially carried the ballet—had been working on a reconstruction of that piece. Three weeks after A.B.T. opened "Sylvia" at the Met, in early June, the Suzanne Farrell Ballet, in conjunction with the National Ballet of Canada, presented "Don Quixote" at the Kennedy Center, in Washington. In both cases, it was like having a stolen child returned to you.

"Sylvia" tells the story of a chaste nymph who spurns the love of the virtuous shepherd Aminta and then, after getting an arrow through the chest from Eros, changes her mind—not, however, without first being abducted by the evil hunter Orion, from whose hairy hands she must be rescued by Eros. The ballet demonstrates all the qualities for which Ashton, forty-seven years old when he made it, was already famous. First, his ever-fresh traditionalism. "Sylvia" borrows many conventions from the Paris Opera Ballet of the Second Empire—that was the company that produced the original "Sylvia" (1876)—and its ravishing sets and costumes, by the brothers Robin and Christopher Ironside, are even more faithful to that period: Beaux-Arts cloud banks, couturier togas. The choreography shows Ashton's tender connoisseurship of the classical-ballet vocabulary. The dancers not only do a thousand fabulous things in the air; when they land, they do so in an equally pointed and scrupulous manner, as if they were stepping into a pair of new shoes. At the same time, "Sylvia" is warmed throughout by Ashton's homey realism. In the culminating pas de deux, when Sylvia is standing with her back to Aminta, he puts his hands over her ears and pulls her head to his cheek. This is a hug, not what one normally sees in the middle of a grand pas de deux. "Sylvia" is cherishable not just for these artistic reasons but for a historical reason: it is a portrait of Margot Fonteyn at the height of her powers. Fonteyn performed into her sixties, and many people first saw her when she was quite weak. But in her early thirties she had a tremendous technique, and Sylvia's steps prove it.

A.B.T., as is its dubious practice with the big story ballets, cast everybody and his brother in the lead roles. In eight performances, there were four Sylvias and four Amintas, so that nobody got a chance to relax in the role, to own it. In consequence, most of the stars excelled in those parts of the ballet that fit their natural gifts. As the haughty Act I Sylvia, no one could touch Gillian Murphy, with her sparkling competence. In Act II, which is subtler dramatically—the embarrassed Sylvia, in Orion's cave, has to do a sort of hootchy kootchy for him, to delay his assault on her—the champion was Michele Wiles who can act as well as dance. But the most touching Sylvia was Paloma Herrera However great her abilities, Herrera often seems stiff and scared onstage. Here, she settled down, and looked happy and free

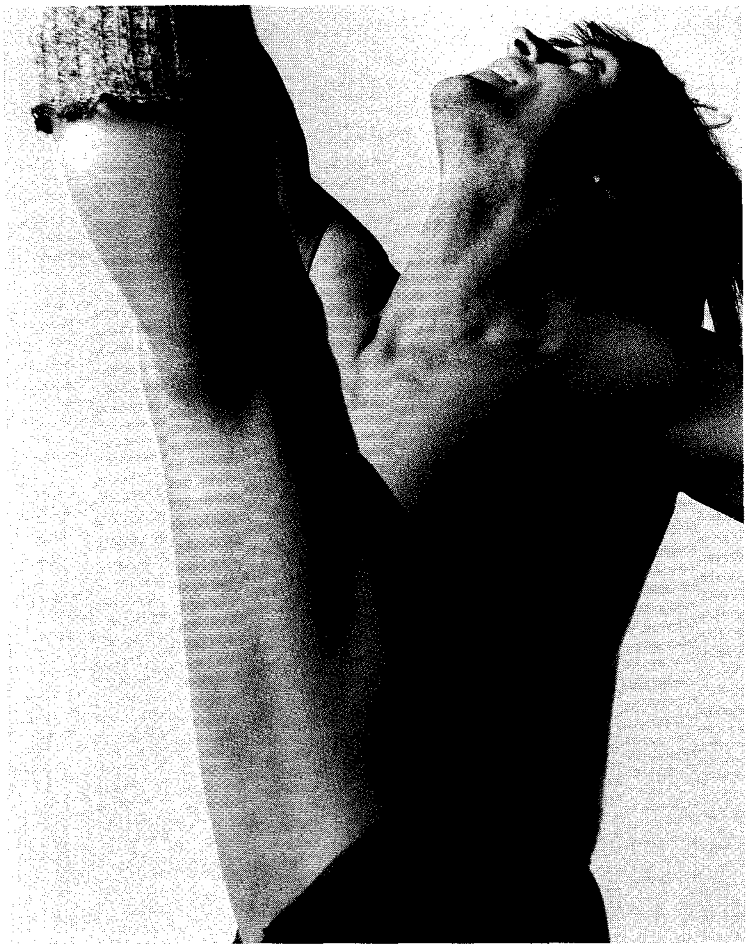
The reason, if I am not mistaken, wa her partner, Angel Corella. All the Amintas were good, and Marcelo Gomes, accommodating those big, beefy legs of his to Ashton's tiny, tatted patterns, was more than good. (As the man sitting next to me said, "When I grow up, I want to be one of Marcelo Gomes's thighs.") But the master of this role was Corella, who I believe is the most complete artist—the one who combines the greatest skill with the greatest warmth—in the male ranks of American ballet today. In the head-grasping moment, most of the Amintas I saw looked as if they were fitting Sylvia for a new pair of earmuffs. (That is what I mean by their not having enough time in the role.) Only Corella knew that he was hugging this woman, pulling her to his heart.

The revival of "Sylvia" will not alter our idea of who Ashton was as an artist. The lovely things he did in it he had done before, and would do again. That is not the case with Balanchine's "Don Quixote." "Don Quixote" has been called a "problem" ballet. What this means, as with Shakespeare's "problem" plays, is that the work in question does not conform to our idea of that artist. Balanchine, we are constantly told, was "neoclassical"—that is, abstract, modernist, and, in the opinion of some people, emotionally distant. In fact, he made ballets in many styles, about many matters, including cruelty and obsession, as can still be seen at New York City Ballet, in "Robert Schumann's Davidsbündlertänze," "Ivesiana," and "Variations pour une Porte et un Soupir." But the major document—you can call it a missing link—is "Don Quixote."

Cervantes kept a steady balance between the comedy and the tragedy of the Don's quest. Balanchine tips that balance. In this ballet, little children playing puppets cheerfully raise their scimitars and hack at the neck of a knight—which is not to speak of what the adults do. "I used to come out with a bloody nose," Richard Rapp, the regular Don of the ballet's early easons, said. Don Quixote is beaten; he is dragged off in a net. Before that, he is haried like Christ. He is placed on a fake hrone, and a crooked diadem, like a crown of thorns, is jammed on his head. At that moment a soft light washes over the stage and, to what we now know as Dulcinea's heme, that visionary lady enters, to save he Don. He recognizes her; he follows her. Like Bottom with Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which Balanchine created three years earlier, he eats out of her hand. On the ballet's opening night, the choreographer himself played the Don. Farrell has written that up to this point she did not realize that Balanchine was in love with her. She got the message then. So did the audience, and the sight of the sixty-one-year-old master, on his knees, eating out of the hand of a teen-ager—the masochism of that action, made worse by the Christ imagery—was unnerving to many.

Then there is the choreography. For long stretches there is none; the opening and closing scenes are largely dumb show. And when there is dancing much of it is based simply on stepping—either piqué (walking on point) or bourrée (gliding on point). Farrell has said that Balanchine packed her role with bourrées because she was not good at them and he wanted to give her practice. But even the most elaborate, decorated dances in the ballet—especially the Act II court dances, and above all the Pas de Deux Mauresque, which looks as though it were made by the people who did the Alhambra—often come back to stepping.

One hesitates to try to interpret this. The risk of sentimentality is great. But together with the prominence of children in the ballet—a tiny princess who needs rescuing in the prologue, the youngsters in the puppet show in Act I, the altar boys in the finale—it strongly suggests innocence: things that are modest and fundamental and true. The note of the spiritual never lets up in this ballet. It culminates in Act III, in a five-minute solo for Dulcinea, which, as performed by Farrell, was the most remarkable piece of dancing I ever saw. (There is a pirated film of it, shot from the auditorium on opening night. I have heard people gasp as they watched it.) Supposedly, Dulcinea is trying to rouse the Don, and get him to escape. But the dance goes way beyond that. In its almost frightening impulsion, and its hair-raising, off-center turns, it seems almost inhuman—beautiful and catastrophic at the same time.



Angel Corella of A.B.T. Photograph by Craig McDean.

Over the years, Balanchine tinkered repeatedly with "Don Quixote." Farrell has stuck closely to the 1965 version, but with a few revisions. There is a new set, by the veteran designer Zack Brown. It is very imaginative, and, reportedly, it fits into three trucks, for touring. There are small changes in the action, too. For example, the religious procession that precedes the Don's death scene no longer includes an Inquisitional book-burning. The Church thus comes off better.

The casting was a mixed business. Momchil Mladenov was a marvellous Don; he made the old man comical without depriving him of his dignity. But the choice of a Don must have been easy for Farrell compared with the task of replacing herself as Dulcinea. She picked two women, Sonia Rodriguez and Heather Ogden, principal dancers with the National Ballet of Canada, to appear in alternating casts. Both were impressive—Rodriguez stronger technically, Ogden more poignant—though neither of them was able to do what Farrell did with the great Act III solo. They made it psychological. ("Get up, Don Quixote! We've got to get out of here!") She made it spiritual. ("Get up, Don Quixote! Life is hell. Heaven is waiting. Get up, so you can die at home.") Farrell has said—and proved—that she doesn't look for performers who dance the way she did. Nor, if she looked for them, would she find them. No one has ever equalled her in fearlessness, or in metaphoric power. But she has at least taught her charges the sort of thrillingly elliptical phrasing that Balanchine taught her. "I want pulsing, pulsing," Balanchine told her as he coached her in the Act III solo. She clearly told her Dulcineas the same thing, and in this freighted role they pulsed like there was no tomorrow. It wasn't Farrell, but it was a lot.

"Don Quixote" is a lopsided, strange, despairing piece. Near the end, the Don is again on all fours, and a pack of grinning courtiers are trying to capture him in a cage. Three times they place the door of the cage in his path, and he looks at it and turns away. Finally, the fourth time, he hesitates, and then, with his head bowed, he crawls into the cage and lies down, like a pig being taken to market. This must be what it is like to die, which the Don does soon afterward. "Don Quixote" is not piercing; it is stabbing. And that's the form in which Farrell has given it back to us: unapologetic, unassuaged. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

MAKING MISCHIEF

"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "Wedding Crashers."

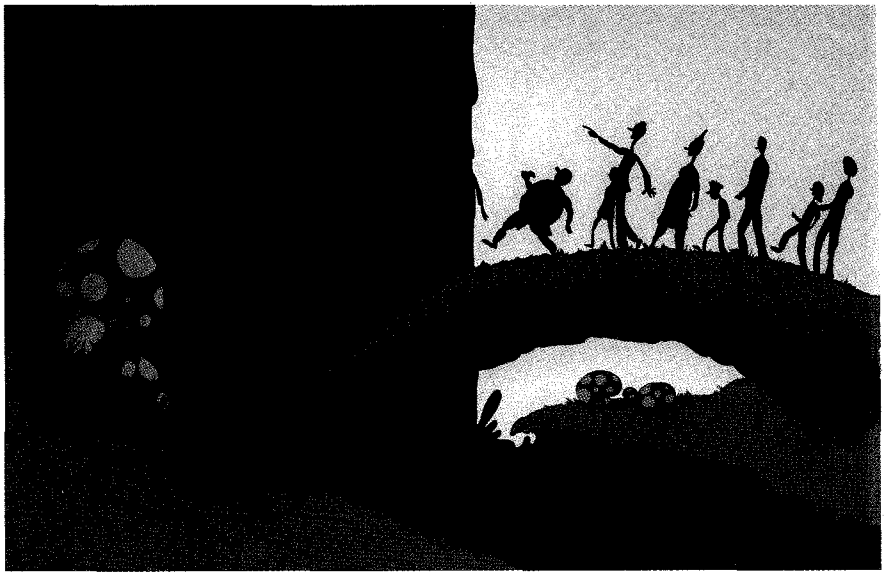
BY ANTHONY LANE

The new Tim Burton movie stars Johnny Depp as an ageless weirdo, whose magical skills are matched only by his hangups about where he came from and how he is supposed to make friends with regular people. The film is called "Edward Scissorhands." I beg your pardon. The film is called "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and it springs from the book by Roald Dahl.

Charlie (Freddie Highmore) lives in a heap of a house with his parents (Noah Taylor and Helena Bonham Carter) and a selection of bedridden grandparents who appear to be rehearsing for a production of "Endgame." The least collapsed of them is Grandpa Joe (David Kelly), who used to be employed locally at Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. One day, Grandpa Joe and his colleagues were sacked to make way for a workforce of Oompa-Loompas—tiny mischief-makers, hired from distant shores.

Readers of the book will recall what happens next. Mr. Wonka establishes a contest. Five golden tickets are hidden inside five random chocolate bars, offering five children the chance to tour the Wonka factory. We know full well that Charlie will find a ticket, yet there is still a great crunch of satisfaction when he does. Accompanied by Grandpa Joe, Charlie arrives at the gates of the factory on a shining day and meets his fellow-winners: Augustus Gloop, Violet Beauregarde, Veruca Salt, and Mike Teavee. (Dahl never hung back on names.) All are present on-screen, with a number of tweaks. Augustus, for example, is still pneumatically plump, but now he hails from Germany, where we see him posing in a sausage shop. This is so unjust, outdated, and downright obvious that all you can do is laugh, and it suggests a cackling kinship between author and director. Neither so much as nods to political correctness—Dahl because he knows that children are the most incorrect members of society, and Burton because politics of any flavor belongs to a faraway place named Planet Normal, upon which he has yet to land.

The remaining plot is an infantilized version of Agatha Christie. The more unsavory children are herded into a closed environment and, one by one, eliminated. Augustus is sucked up a glass pipe, Veruca is attacked by trained squirrels, and so forth. The role of the mock villain is taken by Willy Wonka himself, and, in the book, we heartily concur with the penalties that he inflicts; Violet *does* deserve to be inflated into a giant blueberry, the acidic little brat. But what if the perpetrator is Johnny Depp? And what if he dresses like Oscar Wilde, smiles like Michael Jackson, enunciates like Tootsie, and wears rubbery purple gloves to keep away the germs? Where does moral tutelage end and sadistic farce begin? There is an Old World courtesy to Dahl's Wonka that is abandoned by the film; he now retorts to overtures of friendship ("I'm Violet Beauregarde") with a venomous "I don't care." He is what Macbeth would call a cream-faced loon, and far more of a child than the actual children around him. There is no doubt that he despises them, and that raises questions as to why he has lure them, with promises of candy, into hi edible home.



Johnny Depp plays Willy Wonka in Tim Burton's new movie.

I suspect that Depp has gone to thes unappetizing lengths because he fear that, without a handful of spice in the mi the movie might overdose on whims Depp is getting used to these mercy missions, having realized that eyeliner alon could stop "Pirates of the Caribbean from sinking into period heartiness. H is right to worry, because "Charlie an the Chocolate Factory" is surprisingly unwild. It is often astounding, but if yo hand a hundred and fifty million dollars to Tim Burton and tell him to spen it on sweetmeats you damn well expec to be astounded. He summons all th drooling luxuries that abound on the pag (the thunderous, cocoa-hued waterfall is perfectly rendered), while adding a few toppings of his own—the bulging pink sheep, for instance, that are sheared for their fleeces of cotton candy. The trouble is that the eye, no less than the palate, is at first dizzied, then acclimatized, then jaded, and, finally, semi-sickened. You don't know what treat is coming next, but you know that it will be succulent and strange, and that very knowledge starts to dull the edge of your enjoyment, as if it were coating your tongue.

This is not so in the novel, and for one good reason: Roald Dahl was a man of speed. His imagination was as fat as a pig, but his literary method was lean. In an early draft of the book, fifteen children entered the factory; he tested the result n a young relative, who pronounced it "rotten"; in the end, only the five made the cut. As for the opening chapter, "Here Comes Charlie," it's one of the most efficient scene-setters since the start of "Great Expectations," with a compound of impoverishment and yearning so sharp that it pricks the senses, like vinegar. (And it's still not as quick as "James and the Giant Peach," which kills off a couple of parents in thirty-five seconds flat.) Dahl inherited from Dickens a direct feed into the terrors and wishful thinkings of the young, and that is why Freddie Highmore, as Charlie, is the nerve center of the film. Highmore, as he proved opposite Depp in "Finding Neverland," is up for high jinks, but he sees through low tricks. You catch a straightforwardness in him, a sanity in his gaze, that Dahl would have trusted. What virtue is there in a maddened, quaking world unless a small boy like Charlie or James can hold steady and register the shocks?

There is one aspect of Burton's film which is wholly foreign to the book. He and his screenwriter, John August, have decided to honor Mr. Wonka with a backstory. And so we hear of his deprived upbringing at the hands of a father who, as a dentist, disapproved of candy. This is smoothly done, and the father is played by Christopher Lee, but the whole conceit is superfluous. It shrinks rather than heightens the oddity of Willy Wonka, and its sole purpose is to crank up the director's obsession with parenthood. (Depp is to Lee what he was to Vincent Price in "Edward Scissorhands," and even "Batman" traced its heroics back to a childhood trauma.) Some things in life just cry out not to be explained, and the urge to make chocolate, like the desire to eat it, is one of them. Dahl's story was never intended to be anything other than a sticky-fingered feast, whereas the movie flits through pedophobic creepiness and ends up as a slightly costive parable of family values. To chide a movie that oozes so many gags may sound churlish, but you can't help feeling that a fantasist as accomplished as Burton can manage this kind of project with his eyes shut. The trouble is that, from film to film, his dreams are starting to look the same.

The first twenty minutes of "Wedding Crashers" are rabid with simple pleasure. The crashers in question are Jeremy (Vince Vaughn) and John (Owen Wilson), a pair of divorce mediators in Washington, D.C., who spend their summer weekends rolling up to the weddings of people they don't know and becoming the life, the soul, and, in many disgusting instances, the smeared cake frosting of the party.

I was wondering when somebody would make a movie out of this compelling contact sport, with its built-in safety procedures. (If guests from the groom's side don't recognize you, they always assume that you know the bride, and vice versa.) The director, David Dobkin, and his writers, Steve Faber and Bob Fisher, kick off with a hectic montage of good will, as John and Jeremy grin their way into Jewish, Chinese, and other ceremonies, eagerly joining in with the dances and toasts. In short, they are the most convincing democrats that you could hope to find, delighting not in cultural one-upmanship but in the glories of ethnic diversity. Could there be a more cheerful sight than that of Vaughn marching into an Indian marriage service and giving his name, at the door, as Sanjay Collins?

Needless to say, it can't last. Jeremy and John hit the big one: a swish society affair, in which the Treasury Secretary, William Cleary (Christopher Walken), is marrying off one of his daughters, leaving two more (Rachel McAdams and Isla Fisher) to be ogled by our heroes. The action slows to a weekend house-party, whereupon the fizz—and the generosity—starts to leak away. Who wants vomit jokes, or homophobic jokes, after such waves of benevolence? And can the Owen Wilson who peppered every wedding reception with cruddy yet successful pickup lines ("I think we only use ten per cent of our hearts") really be the same guy who goes gooey, for real, over Rachel McAdams? The makers of films like "Wedding Crashers" and "Hitch" seem determined to withdraw their comic fangs in the presence of romance, which is precisely when their bite is most required. Thank heaven for the leading men—especially Vince Vaughn, who seems to grow taller with every film, like a hopped-up Gary Cooper, and who shoots his mouth off with such scattershot brio that he flubs the occasional word, or picks an overheated one ("Erroneous! Erroneous!"), or forgets to pause for breath. This is a dumb-ass picture about dumb-ass men. It even looks dumb, with the camera gazing into people's faces until the funny thing they have to say has come and gone. Still, there is no mistaking the gonzo uplift of its opening, and sometimes ten per cent of your brain is just enough. ♦

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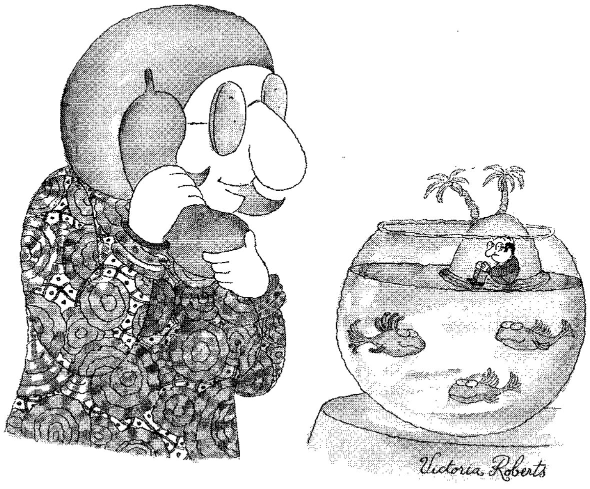
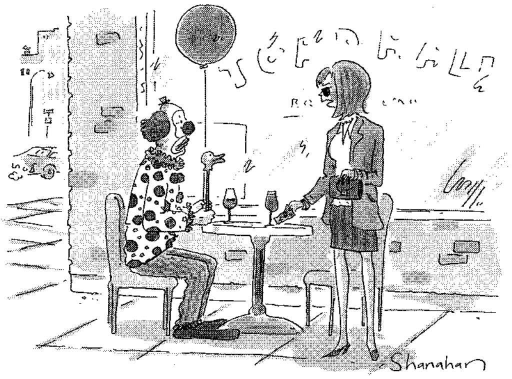
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Mick Stevens, must be received by Sunday, July 24th. Finalist in the July 4th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the August 8th & 15th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"He's the cutest little thing, and when you get tired of him you just flush him down the toilet."
Jan Richardson, Ridgeland, Miss.



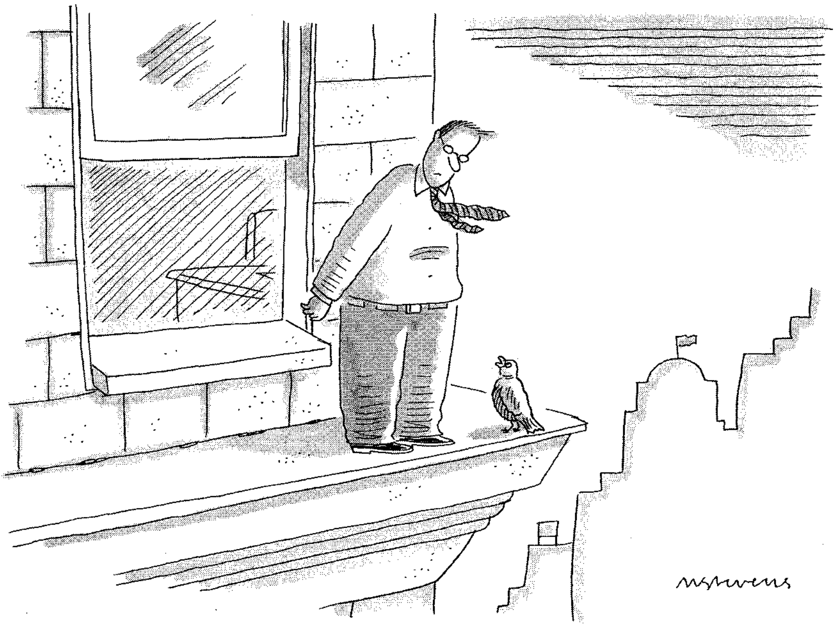
THE FINALISTS

"I'm beginning to think I liked you better when you worked at Morgan Stanley."
John Mariani, Tuckahoe, N.Y.

"I told you not to bring the clown!"
Max Brooks, Chicago, Ill.

"Well, if you must know, he makes me laugh."
Jacqueline Tager, Hollywood, Calif.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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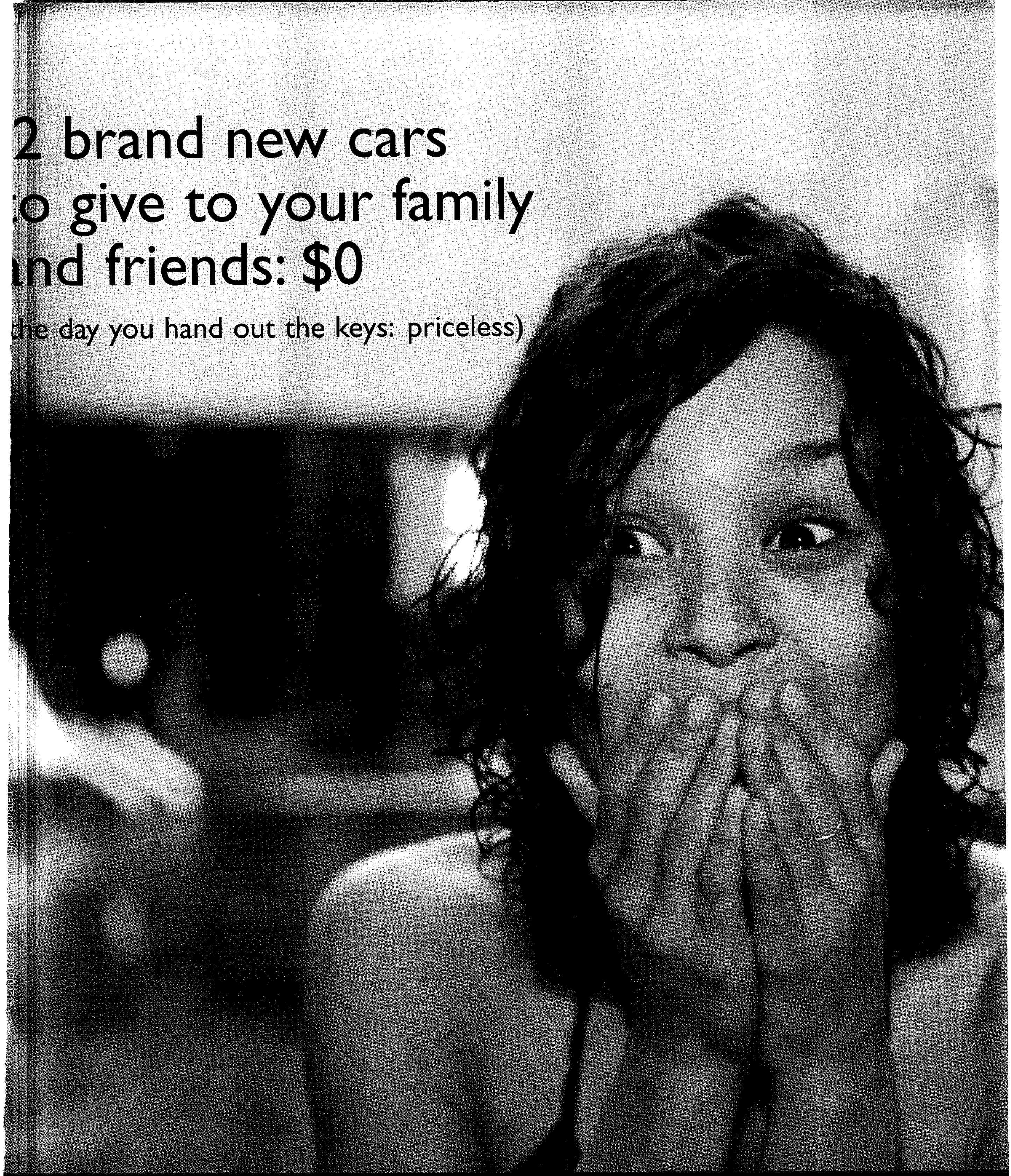

2 brand new cars
o give to your family
nd friends: $0
the day you hand out the keys: priceless)

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You could win 12 cars in our "Win 12 Cars Sweepstakes." Use your MasterCard® between July 1st and September 15th and you'll be automatically entered.* (And you get triple entries for every purchase at a gas station.) So keep a car for yourself, then figure out who your 11 favorite people are. Go to www.win12cars.com. there are some things money can't buy. for everything else there's MasterCard.™

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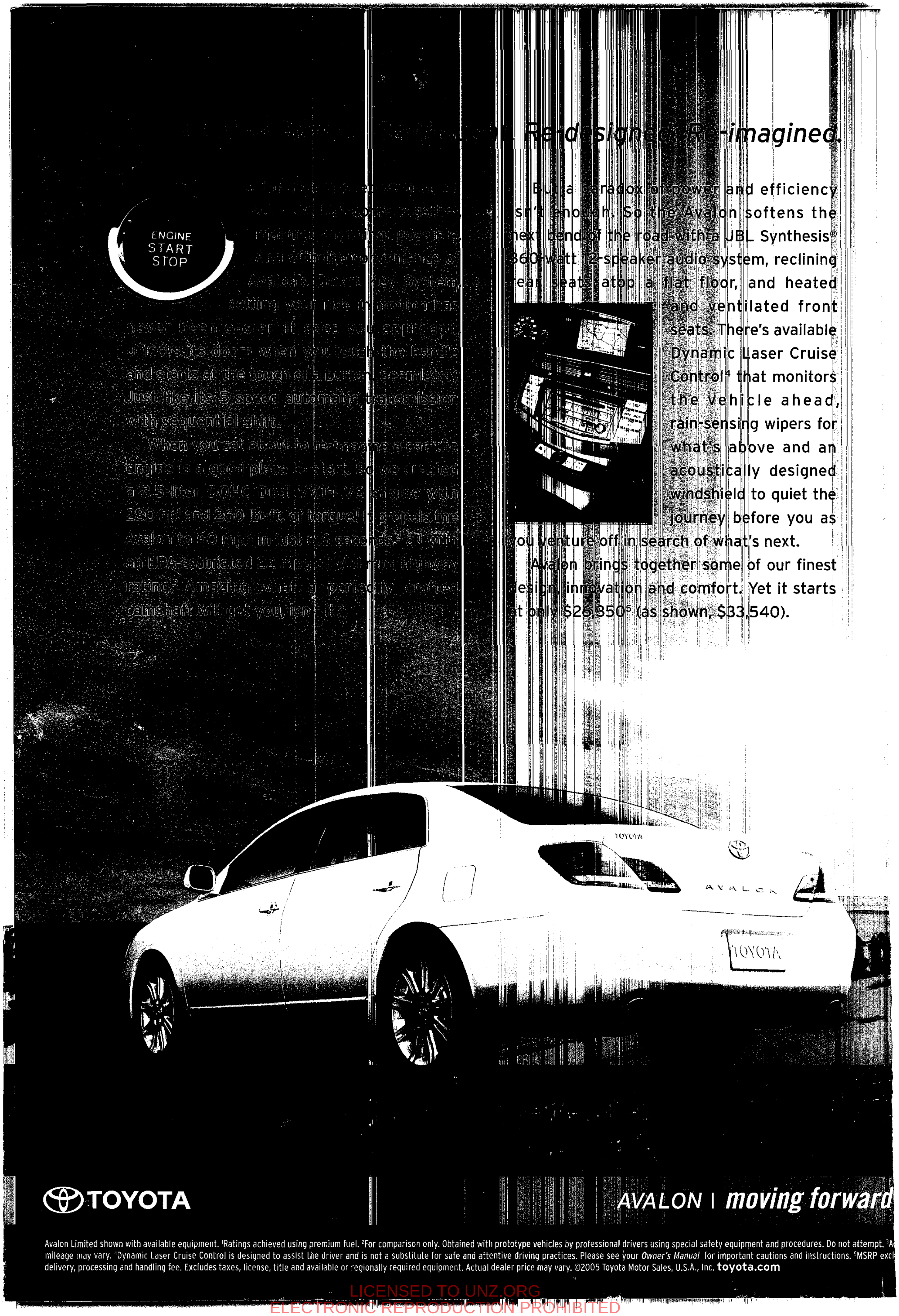
win 12 cars
SWEEPSTAKES

*No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. PIN-based & international transactions not eligible. Starts 7/1/05. Ends 9/15/05. Prize maximum total retail value not to exceed $360,000. Cars' brand/make/model subject to change. Other restrictions apply. See page 93 for Official Rules & complete details.



[illegible] *Re-designed. Re-imagined.*

[illegible] the re-designed Avalon, [illegible] has come together, making anything possible. And with the convenience of Avalon's Smart Key System, setting your ride in motion has never been easier. It sees you approach, unlocks its doors when you touch the handle and starts at the touch of a button. Seamlessly. Just like its 5-speed automatic transmission with sequential shift.

When you set about to re-imagine a car, the engine is a good place to start. So we created a 3.5-liter DOHC Dual VVT-i V6 engine with 280 hp[1] and 260 lb-ft. of torque.[1] It propels the Avalon to 60 mph in just 6.6 seconds,[2] all with an EPA-estimated 22 mpg [illegible] highway rating.[3] Amazing what a perfectly crafted camshaft will get you, isn't it?

But a paradox of power and efficiency isn't enough. So the Avalon softens the next bend of the road with a JBL Synthesis® 360-watt 12-speaker audio system, reclining rear seats atop a flat floor, and heated and ventilated front seats. There's available Dynamic Laser Cruise Control[4] that monitors the vehicle ahead, rain-sensing wipers for what's above and an acoustically designed windshield to quiet the journey before you as you venture off in search of what's next.

Avalon brings together some of our finest design, innovation and comfort. Yet it starts at only $26,350[5] (as shown, $33,540).

Avalon Limited shown with available equipment. [1]Ratings achieved using premium fuel. [2]For comparison only. Obtained with prototype vehicles by professional drivers using special safety equipment and procedures. Do not attempt. [3]A
mileage may vary. [4]Dynamic Laser Cruise Control is designed to assist the driver and is not a substitute for safe and attentive driving practices. Please see your *Owner's Manual* for important cautions and instructions. [5]MSRP excl
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